James L. Baughman

Same Time, Same Station

Creating American Television, 1948–1961

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SAME TIME, SAME STATION

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Creating American Television, 1948–1961

James L. Baughman

The Johns Hopkins University Press
Baltimore

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Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper
9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

The Johns Hopkins University Press
2715 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21218-4363
www.press.jhu.edu

Lyrics quoted on page 114 are from "I've Gotta Crow." Lyrics by Carolyn Leigh. Music by Mark Charlap © 1954 (renewed) Carolyn Leigh and Mark Charlap. All rights controlled by Edwin H. Morris and Company, a division of MPL Music Publishing Inc. All rights reserved.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Baughman, James L., 1952–
Same time, same station : creating American television, 1948–1961 /
James L. Baughman.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN-13: 978-0-8018-7933-3 (hardcover : alk. paper)
ISBN-10: 0-8018-7933-7 (hardcover : alk. paper)
1. Television broadcasting—United States—History. I. Title.
PN1992.3.U5B36 2007
384.550973—dc22 2006015560

A catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

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To Mickey

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A number of colleagues at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and elsewhere gave good counsel and help, including William B. Blankenburg, Paul Boyer, John M. Cooper, Scott Cutlip, James P. Danky, Robert Drechsel, Christopher Foreman, Lewis A. Friedland, Lewis Gould, Sally Griffith, Michelle Hilmes, James L. Hoyt, Stanley Kutler, William E. Leuchenburg, Roland Marchand, David McDonald, Jack M. McLeod, Russell Merritt, Philip Ranlet, Donald Ritchie, Philip Rosenthal, Bo Ryan, David Schuyler, Michael Socolow, Stephen Vaughn, and David Weinstein. So did several friends from outside the academy, Jay Rath, Nancy Rathke, Marsh Shapiro, and Dirk van Leeuwen, as well as my cat, Carla Baerga Baughman. I am especially grateful to Richard M. Fried, Michelle Nelson, Roger Rathke, and Jeremi Suri for reading and commenting on individual chapters, and to Donald Downs and Michael McManus for their unflinching moral support.

Although librarians and archivists across the country assisted me, I am most indebted to the staffs of the Wisconsin Historical Society Library and the University of Wisconsin–Madison Libraries. I am especially grateful to the Historical Society's Helmut Knies. Thanks, too, to Selice Eiseman of the Directors Guild of America, Michael Mashon of the Library of Congress, and Kristen Wilhelm of the National Archives. Brian Deith of the Journalism School and the staff of the University's Division of Information Technology vanquished various technological demons.

Over the years, a number of students—Brad Gorham, Jon Hickey, Jack Kapfer, Scott Latus—gathered materials for me. Near this work's conclusion, Robert A. Rabe provided critical assistance for which I am deeply appreciative. Karen Miller, Jon Pollack, Robert Pondillo, and Inger Stole generously shared findings from their own research.

Many of my travel and other research expenses were covered by the Irwin Maier Faculty Development Fund and administered by the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Madison. I am grateful to the Maier family and to the school for their support. The school's Janet Buechner handled the fund and aided me in numerous ways. So did Susan F. Brandscheid.

Finally, I thank Henry Y. K. Tom and the superb staff of the Johns Hopkins University Press, as well as Anne R. Gibbons for her meticulous copyediting.

My wife, Michele M. Michuda, had to live with this project for many years. I hope that dedicating this work to her helps to compensate for many lost evenings and some very bad 1950s variety show jokes. Some weren't funny even in 1955.

INTRODUCTION

You in the United States have on your shoulders the leadership of Western civilization at the present time. How your society develops toward a greater maturity, toward a greater understanding of all types of human values, is of immense importance to the whole world, not only to yourselves. And how that develops is going to be influenced not a little by how television develops in your country.

A. Davidson Dunton, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1952

Like most Americans, I have lived with television for a long time—but not long enough. I am too young to have viewed, except for several series preserved on film, another television, consumed in the late 1940s and early 1950s. It was an often awkward period for the newest medium. Industry practices and audience expectations were still being shaped. Yet for historians of the mass media, TV was arguably the most intriguing when its direction was so uncertain.

When first drawn to this topic as a graduate student in history many years ago, I was fascinated by the argument that television had experienced a golden age in the 1950s. It was a tempting nostalgia at the time. In the late 1970s, three commercial networks essentially dominated the medium and gave little license to creativity (though 1960s TV, in my opinion, was even worse).[1] Proponents of the golden age, including some vocal survivors of the era, insisted upon the superiority of 1950s television. It encouraged writers and performers. Live telecasts afforded viewers the sensation of being in a Broadway theater or New York night club. "Does TV generate that kind of excitement anymore?" asked a former critic in 1973. "Maybe over quarterbacks."[2]

Not long into my research I had to discard the notion of a golden age. Whether viewing old programs late at night or reading scripts in

various archives, I came to realize that most of what television produced in the 1950s, however ambitious, does not hold up especially well. Usually the disappointment can be easily explained. Producers had too little money. Telecast live, performances could not be reshot or edited with the care seen in even a middling feature film of that time. The lack of good production values often betrayed the best of intentions. And some writers were simply too preachy, too lacking in humor or humility.[3]

That said, there were critical differences between 1950s television and what followed. Television network executives and station managers, like their counterparts in film and the other mass media, did not take their position in American society as a given. Simply put, they worried about upsetting moral conventions. A guardian class of regulators, religious and lay leaders, watched over them. Or so they thought. They would never have dared to make a celebrity out of a morally and intellectually challenged heiress to a hotel fortune. To be sure, during the mid-twentieth century, calculation and hypocrisy figured in such determinations. To have married couples shown sleeping in separate, twin beds appeared laughable not too many years later. But most of those insisting on such arrangements in the 1950s (and early 1960s) were hardly prudes. (How else can the baby boom be accounted for?) Unlike their successors, they distinguished between public and private morality.

At the same time, the first generation of TV programmers had cultural aspirations for the medium. Some imagined that post–World War II consumers would expect more of their mass culture. Again, in our age, it is easy to categorize such aspirations as "elitist" or, worse, attempts to impose cultural hegemony on the great audience. Many of those promoting the telecasting of Shakespeare on a commercial network did suffer from an excess of cultural certainty. Yet many believed, like artists working in the 1930s for the New Deal's Works Progress Administration, in high culture's possibilities. They had sought, one historian observed, to create "a nation of cultural consumers."[4]

Most of those commenting on American television in the 1950s, whether as reporters or critics, shared this enthusiasm about the newest medium's possibilities. These writers, whose observations frequently inform this book, were hardly overeducated champions of high culture. Jack Gould of the *New York Times* never attended college. Although many accepted cultural hierarchies that are no longer in fashion, many more held to a simple idealism that was not culturally rigid about what

TV could become. They praised television's popular series and performers, as well as its attempts to present culture and ideas.[5]

Great disappointment came as the medium settled on a set of practices or "rules" that in effect standardized the business of television in the late 1950s. Risk taking became much less common. Cultural choice narrowed largely to whatever (morally mainstream) productions appeared likely to reach the largest number of viewers. One of TV's early enthusiasts, the critic Gilbert Seldes, had warned of this outcome. "The real danger," he wrote in 1956, "is that the public arts will succumb to their own routines, that experiments will become fewer and fewer, that new things will be only superficially different from the old and good things will not be allowed time enough to take hold, to root themselves to live."[6]

Commercial television gradually stopped caring. In the late 1960s, Congress reluctantly created the Public Broadcasting Service. Over time, PBS relieved the networks of the cultural production attempted a decade earlier. It also marked the beginning of a segregation, cemented by the diffusion of cable television in the 1980s, of taste. The networks felt increasingly free to drop programming intended to please cultural and political elites. Cable subscribers could find a few channels with cultural aspirations.

Cable encouraged the rest of the great audience to indulge, like patrons of a cafeteria, in whatever cultural product they preferred—and nothing else. Those who deny cultural hierarchies—and there are many, especially in the academy—will celebrate this media environment. Although I will not join them, I will confess to consuming much more ESPN than C-SPAN.

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SAME TIME, SAME STATION

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1 Opening Number

It had been in the offing for a generation. Then suddenly, in 1948, Americans in the nation's largest cities began buying their first televisions. They were expensive indulgences. When television came to the Twin Cities in April 1948, most sets were offered for $299.95 and up.[1] Although average prices fell and screen sizes increased, purchasing a set remained a major expenditure for years. In October 1952, a consumer could have bought both an electric range and refrigerator (on sale at Sears) for the cost of a 21-inch television.[2]

The first person in a neighborhood to get a television paid an additional price: friends and neighbors dropped by. "Families that purchased the town's initial television sets had delicate social problems," one contemporary recalled, "coping with friends and relatives who devised ingenious ways to visit during prime evening hours."[3] Just over three-fourths of TV owners surveyed early in 1949 reported having more adult guests than before. Nearly as many, 72.1 percent, said they had more children coming to their homes. Some owners endured multigenerational invasions. When Teddy Ryan of Chester, Pennsylvania, bought a set around 1953, his five brothers—and their mostly male offspring—came to the house every Friday night to watch the fights on NBC.[4]

Especially in the medium's earliest years, owners put up with other problems. Schedules were initially restricted. On April 12, 1949, Los Angeles had six stations. One offered no programming after 6:00 p.m.; another's last telecast began at 8:05 p.m. The next day, L.A.'s Channel 11 went dark, while another station aired nothing but a test pattern, with music, for three hours.[5] Throughout the country, consumers far from TV transmitters struggled to obtain a good signal. Mounting an antenna helped improve reception. Status-conscious nonowners could have antennas installed; neighbors would not know they did not actually have a TV to go with the antenna.[6]

Some resisted the age of television. A North Carolina white man tried holding out, despite the entreaties of his two daughters. When he realized that poor African Americans were purchasing TVs, he relented. Not terribly advanced then in his racial attitudes, he would be damned if Negroes would have TVs while his family did not. Still, pockets of intransigence flourished well into the early 1960s. Households headed by ministers and rabbis were much less likely to have televisions as were those of older, childless couples.[7] Many college professors and intellectuals refused to buy TVs—and bragged about their resistance. To them, it signified their superiority, their capacity for self-fulfillment. They did not need a heavy appliance to entertain them. Evenings were for reading and contemplation. Columbia University historian Allan Nevins was surprised to learn that his colleague Richard Morris had purchased a television in 1951, "one of the first I have seen in the home of a real intellectual," Nevins wrote. "Most reading and reflective people abominate them."[8] The "television snobbism" at Princeton University was so great, history professor Eric Goldman remarked seven years later, that a distinguished colleague had to sneak into Goldman's house to watch TV.[9]

The snobs could have taken to the hills. Television came relatively late to more isolated, smaller communities in the plains and southern states. In early 1954, only 20 percent of Arkansas homes had a TV set; in North Dakota, 8 percent. NBC newscaster Tom Brokaw was in junior high school when TV reached his South Dakota town a year later; so was newspaper editor Judith Clabes. For these Americans, TV was something they read about in magazines and newspapers, or occasionally sampled during a visit with relatives in larger cities.[10]

These exceptions notwithstanding, TV rapidly became the nation's dominant mass medium. No technological innovation before or since—not newspapers, the telephone, radio, cable television, personal computers, or even indoor plumbing—achieved such overwhelming popularity in so short a span. By the end of the 1950s, only a dozen years after the television boom began, just under 90 percent of all American homes had one or more TVs.[11] Americans spent more time watching television than reading newspapers, listening to radio, or attending motion pictures. Nor did television lose its hold over the great audience as the decade wore on. Viewing time actually increased over this period.[12] The expansion of television would have occurred at an even faster rate had TV stations been available in more markets earlier in the decade.

TV's advent begged a question continually asked at the networks, stations, and advertising agencies, and by performers and other talent. What shape should television take? Those involved in creating American television frequently argued about the best programming strategies for the newest medium. Like most new industries, television underwent a period of trial and error. The rules, or routines, as some students of management observe, had to be written. This book is about the evolution of those rules. Although never before evoked by business historians, the actress Audrey Meadows put it quite clearly. In her memoirs, the star of *The Honeymooners* spoke of her "five years on the carousel of early television, when we were making mistakes, *making rules*, and making quality entertainment all at the same time."[13]

Those designing American television split into essentially two camps. The first, led by NBC executives, many individual entertainers, writers, and advertising agents, believed that TV presented the nation with an extraordinary cultural opportunity. TV could break the monotonous rush to formula that denoted the evolution of motion pictures and radio. The newest medium should look to the legitimate theater and the performing arts. Mindlessly mimicking radio and film would not succeed. Economically secure and better educated, the postwar consumer would have higher expectations for television. The second body of decision makers imagined a different audience—and a much more imitative medium. They gambled on continuity rather than change. Television's acceptance depended on its capacity to re-create, for the small screen, entertainment that consumers had enjoyed on the radio and at their neighborhood movie theaters. In perhaps the greatest irony in the history of TV, the more creative response to the challenge of television was the less successful. By the late 1950s, the second or more risk averse of these two groups had won the argument.[14]

Although the risk-averse solution in retrospect appears the most logical and cost efficient, historians of the culture industries should not ignore the alternatives. Business historians, Naomi R. Lamoreaux wrote, often construct "the rational narrative," which regards outcomes as the inevitable result of rational managerial decision making. But the newness of television greatly complicated that decision-making process. What was "obvious" in 1959 was only dimly understood ten years earlier. To treat outcomes as predetermined, Lamoreaux noted, "foreclose[s] our sense of historical possibility, our sense that events might have worked out very differently; and . . . [it] pushes us toward a

Whig view of the world, where what did happen had to happen because it was superior to alternatives."[15]

That said, some established rules prevailed across the industry. One understanding was that TV, to use a then commonplace expression, was a "guest" in the American home. It must not offend or upset viewers. TV must support rather than complicate the task of being a parent. Government authority must be given the benefit of the doubt, if not active support.

In other, fundamental ways, TV resembled its older sibling, radio. TV was a commercial enterprise. There was no government network. Although educational institutions eventually operated stations, most outlets were profit-making endeavors. And these stations almost always affiliated themselves with one or more of the four national networks, the American Broadcasting Company (ABC), the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), or the Du Mont Network. All but Du Mont, which proved a very marginal player, had operated radio networks.

Like radio in the 1920s, TV stations and networks had to invest ahead of demand from consumers and advertisers. That is, programs had to be offered before many American homes had televisions, and before potential sponsors would underwrite the costs. "NBC is fully aware," one executive observed late in 1945, "that television is a costly broadcasting business and that to establish a nation-wide system will require many millions of dollars. Further, to operate this system during the receiver growth period, many millions more will be required."[16] The risks were daunting, if only by comparison. A failed retailer could always recover some of her initial investment by returning unsold goods and disposing of such fixed costs as shelving and cash registers. A construction company could similarly sell a home or building built on speculation at below cost. Television did not offer the same assurance. Much of the earliest programming was aired live. It came and went. There was nothing to sell off but the viewer's memory—assuming any watched.

Nevertheless, a shared history gave television's first managers some solace. Most of those involved in television had backgrounds in radio, working for a network, station, or advertising agency that produced individual programs. They had developed successful programs and program "types" like the quiz show and soap opera that, new audience measurement services assured them, commanded the loyalties of millions of Americans. And they could take some pride in their labors. By

the 1930s, radio had become the nation's single most popular medium. Americans spent more time listening to radio programs than reading newspapers or viewing motion pictures. Radio time sold to advertisers totaled some $215 million in 1940, increasing to $506 million in 1947.[17]

Radio's managers, with few exceptions, prized live originations. When performers took the summers off, networks offered replacement series rather than recordings of once-aired shows. "In the days of radio," recalled one veteran scriptwriter, "no one ever heard of reruns."[18] Both CBS and NBC normally prohibited the transmission of recorded programs.[19] Simultaneous, live transmissions, after all, justified the networks and the costs of connecting them to stations across the country. Listeners in Montana, Minnesota, and Mississippi could listen to the same performance—and be united as never before. Boasted the president of NBC in 1937, "By bringing into the most isolated hamlets, in the most remote homes of the nation the best the great urban centers of culture and enlightenment have to offer, radio is carrying on the early pioneers' work of unifying the American people."[20]

Subsequent generations cannot understand why "live" broadcasting was an industry article of faith. By the late twentieth century, Americans were conditioned to seeing coverage of Olympic competition on a tape-delayed basis, which producers defended as "virtually live." During the 1998 Winter Games, CBS aired Picabo Street's winning of a gold medal in the women's Super-G competition *twenty-three* hours after the event.[21] Moreover, live programming in the late twentieth century evoked negative images. In 1981, ABC News anchor Frank Reynolds exploded in rage during a live broadcast after learning that Press Secretary James Brady, wounded in the attack on President Ronald Reagan, had not died, as had been reported by one of his underlings. Poor Reynolds had just offered Brady's obituary. "Your confusion is matched by our own," Reynolds admitted. Then, much less wryly, he cried, "Let's get this nailed down. . . . Let's get it straight, so we can report this accurately!"[22] After two decades of viewing skillfully packaged newscasts, many viewers found Reynolds's outburst jarring. In 1996, the news channel MSNBC awkwardly covered a breaking story, a major airline disaster, without the normal advantages of hours of preparation. Anchor Brian Williams, wrote one reviewer, "loomed on screen to fill air time with scanty information, dropped cues and droning experts."[23]

Yet the industry's earlier commitment to live broadcasts had some technological explanations. There was no adequate videotaping avail-

able until the late 1950s. And filming programs posed several problems. The higher costs were hard to rationalize. Broadcasters considered the market for "reruns" of recorded programming to be finite. Consumers were thought to resent rebroadcasts. Only gradually did the networks, over the objections of many affiliates, begin to carry program reruns in the summer.

TV initially mimicked radio in other ways. Network radio had filled its schedule with daily serials and weekly series; they had regular casts of characters who became familiar to listeners. Habits of consumption were cultivated. A popular program would prompt listeners to "tune in tomorrow" or the following week, "same time, same station." Not surprisingly, then, much of television's earliest programming bore some relation to radio. Programs and program types were transferred to the home screen, and popular radio performers, after a decent interval, moved to TV as well.

No one challenged the value of the weekly or daily series—only the extent to which it should dominate the television schedule. Sylvester L. Weaver Jr., NBC's chief programmer during much of this period, appreciated the value of a successful series. But he feared that an excessive dependency on the weekly or daily show had risks. Among them, was failing to attract what Weaver dubbed "the light viewer," individuals who watched less television. Weaver and NBC gambled heavily on an expensive premise: producing more and longer special programs.

Weaver was involved in other debates over TV programming. How much of a network's schedule should consist of filmed programs? Should Hollywood replace New York as a production center for programs? Could commercial television in America play an educational role elsewhere reserved for state-operated systems? Weaver thought so. Television, he insisted, could introduce millions of Americans to culture previously the province only of the well educated. "We must open the doors of privilege to the people," Weaver remarked in 1955. "We must expose all of our people to the thrilling rewards that come from an understanding of fine music, ballet, the classics, science, the arts, everything. To program for the intellectual alone is easy and duplicates other media. To make us all into intellectuals—there is the challenge."[24]

Weaver's culturally ambitious attempts to fashion new rules for television depended largely on his ability to check the power of advertisers. A former adman himself, Weaver did not believe most sponsors shared his cultural aspirations for the newest medium. In this goal he was not

alone. For different reasons, CBS owner William S. Paley wanted to check the power of the underwriter. Both men plotted to upend broadcasting's traditional relationship to sponsors. Although network radio in the 1930s and 1940s had proven immensely profitable, broadcasting was a buyer's market. Individual sponsors not only produced programs but often demanded specific time slots on the evening schedule. NBC and CBS developed strategies intended to reverse this relationship.

For their part, advertisers ultimately proved willing to give up their control over programs if the networks could guarantee large audiences. Until then, sponsors played arbitrators, in effect using their immense patronage to decide which programming strategy would prevail. Most were a hard-headed lot. Advertisers deemed the ambitions that Weaver and others had for television to be secondary to reaching the most viewers with the greatest cost efficiency.

For similar reasons, television's attempt to present news struggled in the 1950s. The decade's video journalism had its moments—and its role model. Edward R. Murrow of CBS inspired a generation of TV journalists, including Ted Koppel of ABC and Bernard Shaw of CNN. Yet audiences were generally slight and advertisers unreliable. Murrow lost his place on the TV schedule and quit broadcasting in 1961 to become director of the U.S. Information Agency. (Interviewing him that year, David Halberstam of the *New York Times* was surprised to find no CBS memorabilia in the director's office.) Television's informational possibilities remained largely unrealized.[25]

By then, television's great debate had been resolved—and people on the wrong side of the argument like Murrow and Weaver were in exile. Although Weaver maintained his characteristic good humor, the outcome embittered Murrow. "It's a great life," he told a young Bill Moyers, "but they'll break your heart."[26]

2 "The Mother of Television"

Tallulah Bankhead: Radio is the mother of television.
Interviewer: Who is the father?
Miss Bankhead: TV has no father.

Commercial television's homesteaders, with few exceptions, came from radio. The two dominant television networks in the 1950s, CBS and NBC, had been the nation's major radio chains. They brought with them routines first learned operating radio networks and stations in the 1930s and 1940s. They had also learned, sometimes painfully, to deal with governmental and popular expectations that deeply affected what they scheduled.

Government Rules

In the "American system" of broadcasting, it fell largely to commercial interests, much of their programming supported by advertising, to provide the nation's broadcast service. Federal agencies, first the Federal Radio Commission (FRC) then the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), determined which groups received radio frequencies. Although the FRC and FCC granted licenses to some nonprofit or educational institutions, most frequencies went to commercial interests.[1] Most stations, in turn, affiliated with national networks that supplied them with programming. And the cost of programming was covered largely through the sale of airtime to advertisers. The sponsor, one contemporary observer wrote, constituted the "fairy godmother" of broadcasting.[2]

The American system was not, as some critics implied later, a triumph for laissez faire, at least not in the 1930s and 1940s. Radio station operators, like theater owners and motion picture moguls, had to reckon with a larger guardian culture deeply concerned about public morality. In 1938, radios could be found in some 26.7 million homes (79.2% of all households).[3] Listeners included the deeply religious or simply prudish. Controversy in any form might anger the politically influential. A generation of network executives, station managers, and advertising agents dreaded incurring their disapprobation. Simply put, they did not take radio's place in American culture for granted. Nor could they. The same government that had seemingly given broadcasters so much could always change its mind. The American system was, after all, exceptional.

Then, too, broadcasters did not possess the First Amendment protections they came to enjoy later in the century. The 1927 Radio Act and 1933 Communications Act both insisted, if imprecisely, that radio license holders serve "the public interest." Individual broadcasts were not to be censored—except when violating widely held decency standards or practicing outright deceits.[4] Stations were free to emphasize fare that attracted large audiences. However, regulators expected licensees to offer some "minority interest" programming. That is, they had to air *some* news, religious, educational, and other programming that might only be popular with a limited number of listeners. "Minority" in radio law, it must be understood, concerned tastes in programming, not the racial or ethnic origins of listeners. "In building programs for the majority of listeners," NBC executive Judith C. Waller wrote in 1944, "no radio station can wholly forget that there are minority groups which must be considered. They have a place in our democracy; they must also have a place in radio."[5] "We have a responsibility to minority tastes, minority groups," CBS owner William S. Paley later admitted.[6] Atlanta's WSB ("Welcome South, Brother") more than honored this ideal in the late 1940s by producing several commercial-free programs for farmers and their children, while giving airtime to area colleges, including an African American university.[7]

This regulatory expectation was applied to applicants for licenses and was to be demonstrated when stations appealed for the renewal of their licenses every three years. Congress and regulators could have greatly simplified the lives of a thousand station managers and left several

generations of attorneys specializing in communication law seeking other work. License holders could have been free to program entirely as they, their audiences, and advertisers wished. It would have spared stations and networks the costs of producing news and weather reports, or airing Sunday morning church services and educational talks.[8] Not until the 1960s did TV newscasts become profitable for many stations, and religious broadcasts only earned money for stations when, at about the same time, they began charging churches for the airtime.[9] Although minority interest programming never amounted to a large percentage of the broadcast schedule, that stations felt duty-bound to offer such fare belies the idea that the American system was an unqualified victory for private enterprise.

Still, the FCC in the 1930s and 1940s was no burly cop, beating with a nightstick those it suspected of malfeasance. It more often played the role of the aging, barely competent babysitter. A station had to be unusually irresponsible to earn a commission reprimand. In its first fifteen years, the FCC revoked only two licenses; programming violations figured in neither case.[10]

Broadcasters in the 1930s and 1940s feared the FCC less for what it was than for what for it might become. If the commission operated halfheartedly, other regulatory agencies during the New Deal policed American enterprises with enthusiasm. It could not be assumed that the dominant regulatory culture would not in time touch the FCC. And after long neglecting the agency, Franklin Roosevelt began in his second term to name more activist overseers to the seven-member commission.[11] The power to deny a renewal could not be dismissed, one former radio commissioner acknowledged. "The chief function of capital punishment is not to electrocute murderers, but to restrain people from committing murder by warning them of the results if they get caught at it," Henry A. Bellows wrote. "Every broadcaster in the country lives in abject fear of what the Commission may do."[12]

Congress could also empower the agency. "Independent" in name only, the FCC like other regulatory commissions in effect did the bidding of Congress, or more precisely, attended to the preoccupations of those House and Senate chairmen who oversaw them and approved their budgets. Congressional concerns about the growth of the networks not coincidentally led the commission to a long study that culminated in the 1941 Chain Broadcasting Order, which compelled NBC to divest itself of one of its two networks.[13]

Cultural Rules

Broadcasters had to cultivate Washington's favor. Doing so limited the likelihood that the FCC would complicate their workdays. Goodwill was maintained simply enough by not offending large numbers of Americans. Precisely because radio could enter *every* home, and was assumed to have enormous power over listeners, broadcasters did not enjoy the artistic (or marketplace) freedom exercised by the avant garde artist or burlesque house proprietor.

At the same time, broadcasters had to attend to moral and cultural guardians. The guardians were a loose coalition of Catholic and Protestant leaders. Although most held no official position, they often had access to those in power—if not FRC commissioners, certainly some members of Congress. Expecting mass culture to reflect their public morality, the guardians adhered to a nineteenth-century belief in self-restraint and a disdain for the vulgar.[14] Catholic lay and intellectual leaders were especially anxious to sustain an innocence that had been deemed a casualty of the Great War and was absent in the works of such popular 1920s writers as Fitzgerald and Hemingway. Although modernism in literature and the arts after World War I was finding an appreciative audience and critical admirers, most moral and cultural guardians sought to distance themselves from it. They became the architects of the country's "middlebrow" culture of the interwar years.[15]

The middle-class crusaders wanted to contain if not eliminate cultural temptations. These included literature and illustrations dubbed pornographic as well as increasingly daring burlesque shows.[16] Motion pictures similarly came under scrutiny and were subject to state or local governmental prohibitions as well as ones organized by private associations led by Catholic lay leaders. (To reassure such critics, the studios created the Production Code Administration to review the moral content of the scripts of all features.)[17] In 1938, a *Life* magazine photo essay on the birth of a baby was too explicit for authorities in thirty-three cities and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; a Boston police detective arrested *Life* publisher Roy Larsen.[18]

Broadcasters had to be constantly mindful of this culture of control. They were entering the American home. A proper middle-class burgher could avoid theaters featuring girlie shows; he did not have to hang a nude in his parlor. And radio was *in the parlor.* A Pennsylvania couple, writing in 1924, considered their radio "part of the Household

belongings and [Pittsburgh station] KDKA our best friend. And there are countless neighbors just as appreciative as we are."[19] Radio could entertain, but it must not offend listeners' sensibilities. "The medium of radio destroys the sanctity of the home," a U.S. senator from Iowa explained in 1939, "in that it permits strangers to enter at almost any hour of the day."[20]

Very often, the censor wished to shield the young from what was dubbed unseemly, that which might lead them down the wayward path. "The Columbia Broadcasting System has no thought of setting itself up as an arbiter of what is proper for children to hear; but it does have an editorial responsibility to the community," the network declared in 1935. "Programs that arouse harmful reactions in the child must not be presented."[21] "A news broadcast goes indiscriminately to all the family—mother, father and the children," a 1940s United Press Radio news manual observed. "Avoid: Gruesome stories; court trials with unpleasant angles, particularly sex; divorces, except famous personalities and then with any sex angle deleted; crime except in outstanding cases and then played down."[22]

In that regard, deviant behavior must never go unpunished. "Crime and punishment are treated in a way that does not portray a criminal in an attractive light nor condone a crime," NBC's 1948 program policies manual explained. "Criminals are always punished either specifically or by implication." Moral conventions were similarly specified. "The sanctity of marriage and the home must be maintained. . . . Adultery and other infractions of moral law are not presented as glamorous nor as excusable. Divorce is not casually treated nor advanced as the accepted solution for marital problems."[23]

Maintaining moral boundaries was made all the more difficult by radio's reliance on performers from vaudeville and burlesque. Together they constituted the American music hall tradition. Created in the largest cities and performed in theaters across the country, vaudeville shows consisted of various acts—songs and comic skits. The racier first cousin of vaudeville, burlesque, developed in larger cities in the 1910s and 1920s. Burlesque quickly offended the nation's moral and cultural guardians who deemed its comedy too broad, its sexual messages too crude, or worse, disrespectful of gender roles. Indeed, burlesque, Marybeth Hamilton wrote, "capitalized on its disreputability, flaunting its wickedness and purporting to offer what was unshowable in mass-market amusements." Radio was too desperate for talent not to recruit from

the music hall. Many of radio's (and television's) first stars began in vaudeville or burlesque. Vaudeville masters of ceremonies were especially suited to the needs of broadcasters, who in the early 1930s began offering numerous variety programs.[24] They proved to be among the first established program types on television. Nonetheless, the networks gambled a good deal. "The radio showman," one critic observed, "cannot risk the displeasure of the Washington overlords and the possible loss of his operating license by drawing upon the amusing vulgarity of the revue stage."[25] Variety show emcees—or guests from the stage—had to remember their audience. It included people who had never patronized a road show, like the Nebraska farmer and his wife—or "a druggist in Texas," radio comedian Fred Allen observed—who could be offended by a joke only slightly off-color.[26]

Vaudeville, at least, was less chancy. Its most skilled producers had anticipated the concerns of film exhibitors and radio executives in the 1930s. Early in the century, vaudeville impresarios like B. F. Keith worked to win and expand middle-class patrons, especially women, by carefully self-censoring their shows. Even profanity was banned. NBC recruited one of Keith's underlings, John Royal, to oversee its production standards in 1933.[27]

Vaudeville's calculated "respectability" occasionally lost out to burlesque's outlandishness, notably late in 1937, during a sketch on NBC's popular *Chase and Sanborn Hour*. One of many radio programs modeled after the vaudeville revues, the program contained musical performances and skits. Mae West appeared in two. She had her start not in "first-class big-time vaudeville palaces" like those Keith supervised, Hamilton noted, but in New York's cheap theaters, then the burlesque house. Both of her radio sketches played off her vaunted sexuality, the second—and far more controversial—spoofed the story of Adam and Eve. The routine had a decidedly feminist taint. West, cast as Eve, finds the Garden of Eden a very dull place, and her marriage to Adam loveless. West tempts the snake, who secures her the forbidden fruit. Being expelled from Eden brings release; she and Adam discover sex. "I'm the first woman to have her own way," West cried, "and a snake'll take the rap for it!"[28]

The Adam and Eve sketch outraged strict Catholics and Protestants. "Mae West Pollutes Homes," headlined one Catholic publication. The skit "defied even the most elementary sense of decency," the *Evangelist* protested. Worse, her tastelessness spilled into the parlors of

innocents. West "was given [an] opportunity to project into wholesome family circles throughout the country all that animalistic lure of lewdness, language and atmosphere which have made her notorious. The thing was unbearably vulgar, besides being an insolent caricature of religion and the Bible. In thousands of homes, where families are wont to seek a little innocent relaxation and amusement on Sunday evenings at the radio, the most barefaced insult was inflicted upon them."[29]

The West uproar had two explanations. The first related to West's carefully constructed image. The offending sketch, one radio historian has suggested, may not have been that atypical of radio comedy in the late 1930s. But precisely because of West's reputation—and her delight in mocking the moral guardians—she drew far more criticism from religious groups anxious about radio's possible effects on public morals. Mae West was "the very personification of sex in its lowest connotation," declared a Catholic University professor.[30] The second reason for the uproar had to do with limited options: Radio listeners in 1937 had few programming choices, which made West's moral irreverence especially exasperating for some Americans. Especially in less populated areas of the country, where people were more likely to be devoutly religious, only two or three stations might serve families. Some listeners were understandably frustrated that an immensely popular program on one of their stations, affiliated with the most popular network in the country, carried a routine that ridiculed a biblical story with which the most indifferent Sunday school student was familiar.

The following year brought another controversial broadcast, from the opposite end of the cultural spectrum. In July, NBC aired an adaptation of Eugene O'Neill's play *Beyond the Horizon*, which had won the Pulitzer Prize in 1920. The censors failed to remove several lines from the original, including "hell," "damnation," and "for God's sake." Such language was not only sacrilegious to some listeners but perhaps more tellingly conveyed the lack of traditional self-restraint that a well-bred individual should possess. To anyone possessing a "modern" sensibility, such self-control was absurd if not unhealthy. And did not Eugene O'Neill have some artistic freedom where matters of language were concerned? The Federal Theater, subsidized by government relief funds, had thrice produced the play. Yet two months after the broadcast, to little fanfare, the FCC held up license renewals of several of the stations that had carried *Beyond the Horizon.* On the basis of *one* complaint, the commission singled out a Minneapolis station. Although Congress

had carefully limited the commission's authority over the content of programming, section 326 of the Communications Act specified that "no person within the jurisdiction of the United States shall utter any obscene, indecent or profane language by means of radio communication." After many protests that the commission was overreacting to the incident, the FCC renewed the licenses.[31] Networks and stations, however, understood that ignoring the profanity clause ran a regulatory risk.

The commission need not have intervened. The Mae West and Eugene O'Neill episodes were exceptional—examples of the networks' careful self-censorship procedures breaking down. And broadcasters rededicated themselves to controlling the content of what they aired. Industry self-regulation increased in the late 1930s. Radio was proving a hugely profitable enterprise, especially for the two large networks, CBS and NBC, as well as for those running stations in medium to large markets. They, in effect, collectively signed a social contract by entering radio. They would curtail their freedom of expression—laboring not to offend the moral guardians—in exchange for continued access to the great audience of radio listeners. "The networks became guardians of a reactionary form of middlebrow culture," wrote the historian Douglas B. Craig, "bounded by the imagined values and sensitivities of an idealized American home on the one hand and the complaints of irate listeners on the other."[32]

"You'd better mind your P's and Q's," wrote veteran radio comedy writer Don Quinn, "because you're in their homes on sufferance, though you may stay for years and years if you remain nice people." There were only two commandments in radio, Quinn concluded, "KEEP IT CLEAN AND KEEP IT FRIENDLY!"[33] "Be careful not to use 'hell,' 'damn,' and other profanity too freely," CBS news executive Paul W. White admonished would-be newscasters: "Such words are offensive to a great many people, especially fathers and mothers who write bitterly to radio stations that their children heard the words in news programs, and then adopted them in juvenile conversation."[34] Given the money to be made, these rules constituted a small price. NBC carefully banned profanity. "Heck," was an NBC word, cracked comedian Fred Allen. On Allen's program, his friend and fellow comic Jack Benny referred to "water over the darn."[35]

Radio displayed a different timidity regarding public affairs and politics. Broadcasters occasionally refused to air "negative" spots for politi-

cal parties, while often spurning candidates for fringe parties or awarding them the worst possible time slots.[36] In 1936, NBC issued a policy actively discouraging the use of controversial subjects on commercial programs. Satirists with the exception of Fred Allen never flourished, and Allen had to soften his barbs in a never-ending battle with network censors. "Each week," he wrote a friend, "fifty percent of what I write ends up in the toilet."[37]

Caution extended to radio news. Each of the networks had "commentators," usually former newspaper correspondents like Hans von Kaltenborn and Elmer Davis, who analyzed current events. Although most trod a middle ground, a few on both the right and left antagonized politically committed listeners—or the Roosevelt administration—or they simply exasperated their advertisers. They lost their sponsors and left the air. By the late 1940s, the networks began to insist on more balanced analysis and removed the more offensive voices from the air. CBS News's Edward R. Murrow asked that his 1947 contract define his role as commentator as involving the presentation of facts, not opinions. A standard of objectivity, long held by the nation's wire services, had come to radio. At the same time, the FCC prohibited editorials by radio license holders.[38]

Industry Rules

Except for honoring such proprieties, many in broadcasting and advertising had initially assumed that they could dictate programming standards to consumers. There was much hope that radio could in fact provide "cultural uplift" for the masses passively sitting around their receivers in the evening. American entrepreneurs, in other words, would assume a kind of paternal role, doling out "culture" for the listeners, that government-operated networks played elsewhere in the world. Both broadcasters and their sponsors soon discovered, especially as radio spread into more American homes, that listeners were less interested in uplift than entertainment.[39]

Decisions about programming largely fell to the networks and national advertisers. In the evening, when most Americans listened to their radios, they tended to prefer nationally produced shows. The networks' control was hardly complete. Station programming, especially newscasts, and, in areas with large populations of recent immigrants, ethnic music shows, had respectable followings. African Americans, initially stereotyped or ignored by the national networks, had less enthusi-

asm for radio until some stations began producing programs targeting them.[40] Then, too, most stations—around 65 percent in 1948—were not network affiliates, though this statistic can be deceiving. Few high-powered stations were independent.[41] The networks could normally claim to have the largest audiences. Asked to list their three favorite programs, Iowans in an April 1939 poll overwhelmingly preferred network shows.[42]

The networks' success had two sources. The first was perhaps the more obvious: network programming connected people to a larger world; the sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd dubbed it "space-binding."[43] Like the first mail-order catalogs and movie theaters, network radio permitted otherwise isolated individuals to encounter a national culture.[44] Simultaneous transmission of a broadcast allowed those thousands of miles away to hear Paul Whiteman's Orchestra in New York or President Roosevelt's address from the White House. "Living some four thousand miles away from the headquarters of the New Deal, my wife and I have been trying to keep in touch with the momentous events as they unfold themselves at Washington," a Washington State man wrote Roosevelt's press secretary. Because of radio, "distance has been overcome and, to a certain extent, we have been able to share the daily problems of Mr. Roosevelt."[45]

The two leading networks inflated the glories of simultaneous transmission. They had an ally in the Radio and Communications Commissions, which imposed rules that discouraged the use of recorded programs.[46] CBS and NBC opposed subsequent attempts by the FCC to relax its strict regulations and allow performers, led by the singer Bing Crosby, to prerecord their programs. Before the development of magnetic tape, the quality of transcriptions, recorded on a wax disc, could be uneven. Yet the networks' larger worry was that widespread consumer acceptance of transcribed programs—and some mid–1940s surveys suggested that listeners did not necessarily object to some recorded shows—would stimulate competition from nonnetwork producers. A former CBS executive wrote, "I, for one, wish devoutly that sometime the networks would calmly and coolly evaluate the threat of recorded programs without succumbing first to blind terror."[47]

The second network advantage involved the competitive edge any large company had over a much smaller one. Except in the largest markets, shows mounted by individual stations could not compete with the networks in terms of talent and production values.[48] The networks

could bring nationally and internationally known performers into every parlor. With great fanfare, in 1937, David Sarnoff of RCA, NBC's parent company, personally signed Arturo Toscanini, former conductor of the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Philharmonic, to lead the NBC Symphony on Saturday nights.[49] Mindful of the emerging celebrity culture from Hollywood, the networks and advertisers opportunistically made film stars, directors, and gossip columnists radio regulars.[50] However much members of Congress or the Radio Commission prized local originations, most listeners appreciated radio's annihilation of distances. A 1928 FRC order that would have limited network broadcasts to one hour an evening caused such an outcry that the commission quickly dropped the matter.[51]

Any analysis of radio programming in the 1930s and 1940s must reckon with the role of advertisers. "Commercial broadcasting installed the listener as a consumer of radio, not as its customer," Daniel J. Czitrom wrote. "Only sponsors and their advertising agencies enjoyed a direct relationship to the broadcasters."[52] Although radio proved profitable, total demand for network airtime was low enough to create a buyer's market. Advertisers had the upper hand and exercised enormous control over individual shows, most of which they produced and owned. Not surprisingly, such influence dismayed radio's critics. In an October 1946 column, John Crosby of the *New York Herald Tribune* declared "the greatest problem in broadcasting [to be] the control exercised over it by the advertiser."[53]

Although some advertisers saw themselves as cultural missionaries who would underwrite culturally ambitious programming, most sponsors settled on another strategy: to achieve the largest possible audience for their commercials. Radio afforded them unprecedented access to a national audience. Magazines had nationwide circulations, to be sure, but tended to be found almost exclusively in middle-class homes. Only newspapers cut across class lines as much as radio did. But the country had no national daily. Newspapers in America almost stubbornly oriented themselves toward single communities; only a few aspired to statewide or regional distribution.[54]

Despite radio's access to a national audience, neither advertisers nor the networks took that potential audience for granted. The key was to find *and retain* audiences. After several years of relying heavily on musical performances, the networks and advertisers began building their schedules around weekly or daily series offered at specific times. The

series drew inspiration from the extraordinary popularity of two programs, *Amos 'n' Andy* and *The Rise of the Goldbergs*, both of which began their run in the late 1920s.[55] A series-bound strategy had several powerful advantages. It afforded network executives, responsible for providing hours of programming each week, product predictability. A popular series similarly assured demand. Newspapers had for some time understood that reader loyalties could be cemented by carrying specific, popular comic strips like *Little Orphan Annie*. (The continuous stories in many strips anticipated the radio series.)[56] It simplified promotion of programs by sponsors in newspapers as well.[57] Listeners discovering the joys of a particular program knew its return would come the following day or week ("same time, same station," an announcer intoned at the very end of the broadcast). This was designed to engender a "habit" of listening. A well-crafted series all but demanded that listeners return. The stars of *Amos 'n' Andy*, one historian observed, "exploited the serial format to the full, often building interest and suspense gradually, day after day, until all America seemed to be listening and discussing the action."[58] Many families carefully scheduled their Sunday suppers so as not to conflict with Jack Benny's immensely popular program, aired at 7 pm (ET). The star of a popular series, wrote one radio scriptwriter, was "a paid-up life member in good standing of millions of American families."[59]

In the case of comedy or variety programs, such loyalty had additional benefits for the shows themselves. Faithful listeners came to "know" comic aspects of individual characters and situations that constituted what Don Quinn dubbed "the recognition device." Quinn's Fibber McGee had an overstuffed closet; whenever he—or someone else—opened it, listeners heard the crash and McGee's declaration, "By George, one of these days I gotta straighten out that closet!" "The recognition device," Quinn wrote, "can be used to end a bit, point up a spot, punctuate a routine, or serve any number of sly purposes, because it is a guaranteed laugh-getter."[60] "Enjoyment of the Benny show," the critic John Horn observed, "depends entirely on the audience's familiarity with, and acceptance of the Benny family."[61] Benny's vast following understood that he was notoriously cheap. After so many years of references to his tightfistedness, any cues to this attribute evoked laughter. In what one critic deemed "probably the best-known joke in the history of American broadcasting," a robber approaches Benny and cries, "Your money or your life." Benny's response is silence, and then

"I'm thinking it over!"[62] "Jack Benny has only to say 'Hmm' and his audience chortles," wrote two critics in 1951. "In fact, a real Benny fan, conditioned by 19 years of listening to Jack's radio program, begins to laugh about two beats *before* the well-timed 'Hmm.' Jack's comedy key is not surprise but familiarity."[63]

Radio programs tended to fall into categories or "genres": variety programs like *The Chase and Sanborn Hour*, as well as quiz shows, soap operas, police dramas; musical shows were the most commonly scheduled. Producers constructed most series around individual performers or casts. *Lux Radio Theatre* presented adaptations of newly released feature films each week.[64] Variety programs similarly relied on single performers as emcees. Quiz shows had a permanent host and often a regular panel of celebrity contestants.

Because relatively few popular programs aspired to more than retaining large audiences, many intellectuals and academicians began denouncing the new medium. Parents and educators expressed revulsion over radio programming and advertising aimed at children. "There is a growing feeling among thinking people," concluded the president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs in 1935, "that something must be done to assure us that the use of the air will not be abused by questionable programs and those decidedly below a given standard."[65] Cracked one newspaper columnist, "All radio programs have two points in common: one is lack of originality, the other is banality of commercial announcements."[66]

In retrospect, such critics did not acknowledge the extent to which the networks honored the commission's expectation that they serve "minority interests." Broadcasting's detractors have left the impression that radio in the 1930s and 1940s consisted of nothing but soap operas and situation comedies. For a variety of reasons, however, CBS and NBC felt bound to produce other types of fare meant to appeal to the cultural guardians. This included educational talks and town meetings on current events. Both networks heavily invested in broadcasts of symphonic orchestras. NBC carried the Metropolitan Opera on Saturday afternoons; the next day CBS broadcast the New York Philharmonic. At least one critic concluded that "the growth of symphony orchestras is due in large measure to radio's influence."[67]

This is not to say that the networks operated out of a higher sense of social responsibility or idealism, though such sensibilities did occasionally affect executives. Many individual stations were owned by local

newspapers, which prized the medium's informational potential. Many more regarded a broadcast license as more of a public trust than would be the case later in the century. That said, the larger part of the explanation was regulatory. American broadcasters understood that they were being given, without charge, the use of radio frequencies that elsewhere in the world were either under direct state control or much more closely supervised. The "American system" entailed obligations.

So did the networks' relations with stations. National advertisers paid handsomely, even during the Great Depression, for access to national audiences. To guarantee those audiences, CBS and NBC fashioned affiliation agreements with stations across the country. An affiliate was compensated for turning over much of the broadcast day to the network. The network in return provided the station with both commercial and unsponsored, or "sustaining," programs. Although affiliates normally carried commercial shows, they were not obligated to clear sustaining programs, though they helped fill the schedule and spared them the expense of originating their own offerings. Sustaining programs included "serious" music, news and discussion forums, educational talks, and original dramas. In 1944, sustaining broadcasts constituted just over half of all the programming that CBS and NBC offered their affiliates.[68]

Whether sustaining or commercial, cultural and informational programs possessed a secondary benefit to the networks. They were likely to appeal to better-educated, more well-to-do Americans. Many were snubbing the medium with the notable exception of Fred Allen's smartly written comedy program. (Recalled one Allen fan, "if you had any gray matter up there, he was your boy.") Although such "light listeners" constituted a minority of the total audience, they were thought to have much more influence in their communities and in politics, and thus pose a potential threat to the continuation of the American system. Symphonic orchestra broadcasts lost money, one critic observed, yet "they give the broadcasters' bow to artistic idealism potent support of the principle of public service under which they are allowed by a benevolently censorious government to operate."[69]

The networks' sacrifice was calculated in other ways. Although enough advertisers entered radio to make the networks and most larger stations profitable, much airtime remained unsold. The networks scheduled minority interest programs at less popular hours, later in the evenings or on Sunday afternoons. Even the great Toscanini had to per-

form on Saturday nights, when audiences were smallest. Most seasons, NBC aired the Metropolitan on its weaker, Blue network.[70]

News programming was similarly more of an obligation than an opportunity. Networks and stations considered news gathering prohibitively costly in the 1930s. Regulatory expectations could be met most inexpensively by simply placing a microphone before news makers. The broadcast of public events—notably the national party conventions—not only absorbed airtime but flattered the many politicians participating in the meetings. With so many hours unsold, more concessions could be made to prominent Americans—former president Hoover, Socialist party leader Norman Thomas—wishing to speak on public issues.[71] Such special broadcasts were far cheaper than news reportage. Broadcast "journalism" until the late 1930s consisted of little more than a young male announcer reading headlines off a news service wire. "We did only snippets of news," one radio news veteran recalled.[72] Commentators like Hans von Kaltenborn followed with the interpretations. This was relatively inexpensive programming: no facts were gathered, only collated or speculated upon. There were exceptions, notably the coverage of the 1935 trial and execution of the man accused of kidnapping the Lindbergh baby.[73] The most famous, an account of the airship *Hindenburg*'s destruction in 1937, was a journalistic accident. One station had sent a stringer not to cover the zeppelin's arrival, but simply to record the landing for its sound effects library. Meanwhile, the nation's largest network, NBC, often defined news as absurdity. In 1937, an NBC news program hosted an international singing mice contest.[74]

Radio news turned serious in 1938 and 1939, when both NBC and CBS offered extensive reportage of increasing tensions in Europe. CBS's owner, William S. Paley, agreed to the commitment, though only after intense pressure from two of his network's European correspondents, William Shirer and Edward R. Murrow. A greater spur was the possibility that NBC would scoop Columbia with live broadcasts from Vienna. CBS had, in fact, been running its news operations on the cheap. (One of the decade's most memorable and popular news programs, *The March of Time*, was produced by a nonnetwork group affiliated with *Time* magazine.) Tellingly, CBS News lacked its own studio from which to originate its reports from New York. This forever changed as both networks devoted hours to negotiations between German, French, and British leaders at Munich in September 1938. Because the special news-

casts were unsponsored, both networks incurred large losses. CBS alone had to refund $1.32 million to sponsors of programs that had been canceled or cut short to permit the reading of bulletins.[75] Such an investment created new sensations and expectations for listeners. In a letter to an NBC executive, former president Hoover deemed the network's Munich broadcasts "a great triumph of news reporting."[76]

Radio's immediacy, its advantage in delivering updates long after a newspaper edition had been put out, helped as well. Many if not most Americans feared the worst in 1938 and 1939, and began turning to radio news for the latest bulletins. Surveys suggested that even before the outbreak of hostilities in September 1939, radio was partly displacing newspapers as a news source. When war finally came, listeners could, in the comfort of their parlors, hear a war. And it was hard to escape: news programming on NBC rose from 3.8 percent in 1939 to 20.4 percent five years later; news programs constituted 16.5 percent of CBS's schedule in 1944.[77] By the end of the conflict, radio had established itself as a serious information source. Of those asked in one survey which medium best served the public during the war, 67 percent listed radio; newspapers were second, with 17 percent.[78]

Network radio's investment in war reportage proved advantageous on two levels. Great advertiser interest and comparatively low production costs made wartime radio news programs highly profitable. At the same time, the networks understood the goodwill that would come from covering America's participation. An investment in war reportage quieted many of those favoring stronger federal regulation. "It was proof," wrote the historian Gerd Horten, "that American radio worked best when it was left alone—without strict supervision or possible new governmental restrictions."[79] Paley believed CBS gained significant benefits from his calculated altruism. Nearly two decades after the end of the war, a television network president complained about the high costs of news programming. "It should not be forgotten," Paley replied, "that news and public affairs helped build CBS and everything we are today. . . . Without it we might not be able to continue."[80]

After some twenty years, certain "rules" had emerged in broadcasting. Broadcasters did not take their position in American culture and politics for granted. They strove not to upset the moral or political guardians, while trying to impress or at least placate the cultural guardians. Although the majority would be served most of the time, hours would be devoted to minority taste. All told, the economics of broadcasting

did not betray the public interest nearly so much as the medium's detractors assumed.

Thinkers Outnumbered

In the late 1940s the business and rules of radio were changing. Advertiser demand for airtime rose, gradually reversing the ratio of sustaining to commercial programs in favor of the latter. At CBS, sustaining programming fell from 77.1 percent of the network's schedule to 52.2 percent in 1944.[81] Fierce industry critics like Charles A. Siepmann were alarmed. Siepmann possessed clear cultural preferences. Born and raised in Great Britain, he detested American mass culture. Any hope for American radio, Siepmann concluded, would not come from Madison Avenue. As more advertisers bought more hours, Siepmann fell into despair. In the mid–1930s, he wrote, "program hours had to be filled, but for many of them there was no bid from any advertising client. These were the hours filled with sustaining programs, conceived, produced, and financed by the networks themselves. During these hours we heard some of the finest quality programs that have been produced."[82] Such efforts were disappearing. Others shared Siepmann's regret. "American commercial broadcasting has a variety and sheer opulence found nowhere else in the world," the *New York Herald Tribune*'s John Crosby concluded in 1948. "We can listen to the nation's deepest thinkers or to some of the world's most inane masters of ceremonies. But the poor far outnumber the good. The emcees outnumber the thinkers by about fifty to one."[83]

More than advertiser demand accounted for the changing broadcast schedule. Critics ignored what the networks and stations—and certainly the sponsors—could not: shifts in taste and in audience composition. The end of World War II caused interest in overseas reportage to decline. Listening to the radio news had become a habit in one Iowa community studied immediately after the war, yet listeners overwhelmingly (69%) preferred *local* to national newscasts. William L. Shirer, one of CBS's most celebrated war correspondents, saw his Sunday evening news program's ratings fall from 8.4 in 1944–45 to 5.4 in 1945–46. At the same time, the newspaper regained its primacy as an information source. In 1945, 61 percent of those surveyed said they received most of their news from radio compared to 35 percent from newspapers. Two years later, newspapers overtook radio, 48 to 44 percent.[84] Promoters of culturally ambitious programming faced a different dilemma. The

newer members of the national audience tended to be less well-to-do, more rural Americans who were the least enthusiastic about classical music and opera. They were far less likely to tune in the Metropolitan Opera or New York Philharmonic. Even Fred Allen, the one popular radio comic admired by the chattering classes, saw his ratings slide sharply in 1948.[85]

Not all of those planning television understood this last lesson. Some in broadcasting and advertising imagined a different audience for the home screen, and a different set of programming preferences than those apparent in the late 1940s. In fact, radio between 1925 and 1948 anticipated certain outcomes for the newer medium. The fate of sustaining, classical music and news programs in the 1940s suggested what television should not aspire to—if ratings success was the goal.

"The Audience Dictates to Us"

Television's first generation of executives and producers understood radio's basic commandment: the moral sensitivities of any significant portion of the great audience must not be upset. That "portion" might not represent most viewers. Indeed, a minority adept at letter-writing wielded extraordinary power. And the end of the war hardly relaxed their grip. If anything, the years immediately after 1945 saw a renewed dedication to traditional moral values. This may have been prompted by sexual tensions and behavior during the war itself: a million World War II veterans had divorced by 1950; adultery had figured in nearly half the breakups.[86] Or it may have been the effects of the Cold War. No matter. Private morality might be changing; public morality should continue to be proper.[87] "On matters pertaining to sex," wrote a network censor, "America as a whole proclaims itself to be one way and acts another."[88] Broadcasters were expected to behave. With returning soldiers marrying and a baby boom under way, Americans proved even more homebound than in the 1930s. And, in a short period, television, like radio, became a house guest. "Television has to be careful," the producer Bill Todman remarked in 1953, "because of the peculiar psychological business of going into the living room."[89] Remarked the actor and producer Desi Arnaz, "You are coming into their house."[90]

There were missteps, certainly during the medium's infancy. Singer Eddie Cantor in May 1944 prompted the first apparent instance of video censorship when nervous network supervisors cut off the audio during Cantor's rendition of "We're Having a Baby, My Baby and

Me."[91] A flood of letters protesting the use of "damn" in a 1945 teleplay prompted one network to ban the word's use altogether. There were worries about television's presence in homes with young children. Concluded the journalist Alva Johnston, "All serious drama must be expurgated until it contains nothing that might cause a nine-year-old child to ask embarrassing questions." TV, remarked one industry observer, "must attain new heights of innocence."[92]

The networks did most of the hand-wringing. Although determined to give serious dramatists some freedom, NBC forbade excessive drinking in either comic routines or TV dramas. There were to be no references to the "out-house." A lot of "burping" was deleted from one 1949 sketch. Profanity should be avoided. Wrote one network censor, "Transferring night-club routines to television entails appropriate tempering both of costuming and of dialogue; stage business calling for disrobing obviously needs restrictions; murder or suicide in plot developments, it goes without saying, must be governed by a rule designed to meet the approval of the greatest possible number of viewers."[93]

Mass advertisers had their fretful moments. Procter and Gamble, broadcasting's biggest advertiser, had strict rules regarding the content of the programs it underwrote. It closely resembled the film code. National and regional controversies were to be eschewed. P&G forbade suicide and rape. All in all, P&G properties should respect moral certainties. "The moral code of the characters in our dramas," a production memo began, "will be synonymous with the moral code of the bulk of the American people."[94] "On television, what love there is, is always terribly connubial," mused the host of CBS's *Seven Lively Arts.* "Everyone is married. The suspicion exists that animal passion is frowned on because the advertiser doesn't want to distract attention from the toothpaste."[95]

Stations sometimes objected to what they construed to be moral looseness. Older Hollywood films produced before the implementation of the Production Code were occasionally rejected for telecast. A Chicago channel spurned one such chestnut, *Gangster of the Sea*, because, a network executive remarked, it was "completely loaded with drunkenness and brutality, a burlesque dance, lewd women and stereotyping of two minority groups."[96] The occasionally racy, cosmopolitan culture of New York in the 1950s presented its own challenges. Many owners of TV stations in the 1950s were far removed from Manhattan. NBC affiliates regularly complained about lapses, particularly during live va-

riety hours. One objected to beer commercials in which the pitchmen actually drank the product on air.[97] In the late 1950s, three CBS affiliates dropped a dramatic program because of what was considered an unusually long kiss between the two lovers.[98]

Sinners received retribution. When an episode of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* left viewers with the impression that an evildoer had escaped justice, the host appeared to reassure his audience that legal authorities had, in fact, nabbed the culprit. He was a tad droll about it. "He restores moral order," recalled Caryn James, "though with a wink."[99] Suicides were thought to be taboo, though NBC's chief censor, Stockton Helffrich, approved their inclusion in teleplays. "Suicides do take place," he wrote, and "can be justified as plot development." NBC permitted the video adaptation of John O'Hara's novel *Appointment in Samarra* to end with the protagonist Julian English killing himself. Many considered it a daring exception to standard practice. "It was passed with our fingers crossed," Helffrich remembered. That English is revealed to be a loathsome figure may have eased the decision. His suicide *was* retribution.[100]

Next to sin was temptation. "The broadcaster and sponsor may be adult without going libertine," Helffrich wrote. Displays of flesh had to be policed, especially as TV entered the hinterlands. Low-cut gowns favored by Faye Emerson drew little attention at a fancy New York City restaurant. "My show went on late at night," Emerson explained, "and, naturally, I had on what I wore at that hour." Still, her fashion choice upset some small-town set owners whose nights out normally occurred at the local American Legion post or their church basement. Emerson abandoned the gowns that, one journalist cracked, "she wore at three-quarters mast." Others caught the trend. Sharing a dressing room with the film actress Terry Moore, TV star Audrey Meadows was dismayed by Moore's choice of a costume. "Terry wore a lovely cocktail dress, but when I saw the neckline I knew trouble was ahead. It went way too far south for CBS." Meadows improvised. "We yanked the dress over her lovely attributes and, with the addition of a scarf, the problem was solved. Sorry guys, blame that stuffy censor. He hated surprises."[101]

The censor's concern was not imagined. Nor was it limited to a few older viewers in small towns in Iowa or Alabama. Of the 967 complaints the FCC received over a 75-day period in 1951, 22.8 percent decried "indecency, obscenity or profanity," second only to jeremiads about alcohol ads. An Ohio woman wrote that a TV comedienne's revealing

dresses "suggest [a] complete failure of the cotton and flax crops and a plague among the silkworms."[102] Her discomfort was not unusual. *Most* Americans had reservations about public displays of the female body. In a 1955 survey, a majority of men and women disapproved of women wearing Bermuda shorts in public. "We don't dictate to the audience," remarked Helffrich. "The audience dictates to us from the sanctity of its living room."[103]

Television was similarly self-conscious concerning young viewers. Producers of children's programs realized that, between commercials and plugs for various consumer goods, they were to encourage children to obey their parents and established authority. One of the very first children's programs, Du Mont's *Small Fry Club*, included a daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. NBC's *Howdy Doody* taught its very young viewers about citizenship. When the program's marionette protagonist "ran" for president in 1948, the host "offered what was a primer in democracy, explaining how to mark a ballot and [the] rules of an election in a free country," wrote the *New York Times* TV columnist Jack Gould. "Sheriff Tex" on Seattle's KING promoted energy conservation while "Deputy Dave" on San Francisco's KPIX recruited the Oakland Police Department to teach children bicycle and pedestrian safety.[104] ABC's *Mickey Mouse Club*, one historian remarked, offered a "steady diet of traditional instruction."[105]

All told, commercial broadcasters could make money. But their freedom was decidedly limited. Advertisers made radio—and soon television—profitable, but in exchange for their patronage, networks and stations surrendered much of the control over their schedules. They could entertain the great audience—but not always. Sometimes they had to inform and instruct. They could not have opinions, at least not strong opinions. And they had to be respectful—ever mindful of proprieties.

3 The Marionette and the Cross-Dresser

• • • •

There is no program history in televison—everything is experimental.
NBC Executive, 1948

• • • •

Certainly 1948 is the television year.
John Shaw Billings

Beginning October 25, 1943, one television manufacturer had a captive audience. In the New York area, the U.S. Army and Navy operated hospitals to treat soldiers and sailors injured in the fighting in Africa, Italy, and France. Some were in serious condition; others awaited transfer to inland facilities.[1] At four of the hospitals, patients could sample one of the promises of the postwar world, television. Radio Corporation of America (RCA) donated the receivers, and patients could view the mix of programming offered by NBC. TV was something the soldiers and sailors had read about, perhaps seen featured in science fiction serials. A few may have observed RCA's exhibit at the 1939–40 New York World's Fair. For all of them, the future resided in their hospital recreation rooms.[2]

The RCA station in New York, WNBT, offered variety, though not too much. The federal government limited the broadcast day to four hours. Early in the war, the station was a virtual arm of the war effort, airing training films for air wardens and others. "Over 140,000 Air Wardens," a network official boasted, "received their basic training through this NBC Public Service program."[3] When not airing shows like *The Red Cross Program*, dubbed *Old Blood and Boredom* by some insiders,[4] WNBT presented newsreel accounts of the war, including ones

produced by the Army Signal Corps. Gradually, WNBT gained some autonomy. On October 25, 1943, WNBT began telecasts of sporting events at Madison Square Garden. News programming, including footage of the 1944 national party conventions, continued to fill the schedule; on November 7, Lowell Thomas anchored six hours of reports on the balloting "with entertainment interludes." But the station also started to acquire culture. With studio facilities beginning in April 1944, WNBT broadcast several operas. It also aired (four times) a film of Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony performing Verdi's "Hymn to the Nations." As a war tribute, Toscanini ended with "The Star Spangled Banner" and, to honor America's Russian ally, "The Internationale." By the fall, the future truly was visible. WNBT aired two Army football games, and began remote coverage of boxing, first on Friday nights, then Monday evenings as well. Wrestling from the St. Nicholas Arena came on Tuesdays.[5]

NBC executives anxiously sought to know how their efforts were being received. Their audience was small; there were only about five thousand televisions in greater New York during the war. Was anybody watching, and enjoying WNBT's programming? Some viewers responded. One wrote Toscanini directly. At his Jersey City bar, Prospero Turi wrote, "About 50 men saw and heard your grand program, on my television set, and all enjoyed it very much." Forgetting that they were only "watching" as opposed to "attending" a concert, the patrons offered "long spontaneous applause" at the end of the performance. "We wanted you to know we all appreciated it very much."[6] A Connecticut resident dubbed a boxing telecast "the greatest event in television history. With action such as boxing is, I'll have my house here in Stratford, Conn., jammed on every Friday night. Television Sales after the war will be a cinch to go sky high."[7]

Patients at the army and navy hospitals were similarly encouraging—and informative. At Mason General Hospital in Brentwood an average of thirty-five people viewed programs, which was all the more remarkable given the small size of the screen. At another facility, twenty to twenty-five patients watched.[8] TV viewing reportedly helped in the healing process for some. An officer at Mason suggested that "television broadcasts are of great interest and value in the psychiatric treatment and reconditioning of mentally ill patients."[9] Regardless of their mental health, the men echoed the Stratford man in their preference for sporting events. None of the reports sent to NBC mentioned *Carmen*

or Toscanini. Mindful of this preference, WNBT, beginning on Memorial Day 1945, telecast at least one baseball game a week for the viewing pleasure of the hospitalized veterans.[10] Complaints were of a mechanical nature. The first generation of TV sets tended to break down. Two of the eleven televisions at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Brooklyn had broken tubes. One of the three sets at Mason needed repair.[11]

"A Personal (and Cosmic) Mission"

RCA's largesse conveyed its enormous commitment to television. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that no individual institution was more responsible for the spread of television in America. "To a striking degree," wrote the broadcast historian William F. Boddy, "the technological and commercial structures of American television are the product of a single company, the Radio Corporation of America."[12] This is not to say, as Sarnoff dearly wished future generations to believe, that RCA scientists *invented* television. Indeed, TV's initial development owed much to individuals, notably Philo T. Farnsworth, operating very much on their own. A number of companies and entrepreneurs operated TV stations in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and other cities in the 1930s and 1940s.[13]

Yet no other entity possessed RCA's capacity to mass-produce and promote the technology. Originally a subsidiary of General Electric, RCA had been founded in 1919 to prevent British Marconi from perpetuating its monopoly over radio patents in the United States. Soon an independent entity, RCA became the leading manufacturer of radio receivers and transmission equipment, as well as the owner of the National Broadcasting Company. David Sarnoff almost as quickly emerged as RCA's chief executive officer; he literally ruled the corporation for some four decades. The self-educated protégé of the inventor of wireless communication, Guglielmo Marconi, Sarnoff tirelessly labored to position RCA at the forefront of communication technology. His commitment to television became more intense when it appeared the British Broadcasting Corporation was close to trumping RCA in developing the new technology; the BBC launched regular telecasts in November 1936. Sarnoff began pouring even more company resources into television development. One *Fortune* contributor later remarked, "Television is a personal (and cosmic) mission with this determined man."[14]

RCA introduced a line of commercial televisions on the eve of the New York World's Fair in April 1939. The fair itself became a promo-

tional platform. RCA telecast President Roosevelt's remarks opening the fair (Roosevelt himself subsequently received an RCA receiver) and prominently displayed the newest technology at the RCA Hall of Television fair pavilion. RCA began broadcasting on its New York City station the next day. Sarnoff anxiously watched over these efforts. "RCA people can't push the art and industry too hard to please the President," observed *Fortune.* An NBC executive asked network radio station managers and others "to make reference to television wherever possible, either as part of a dramatic script or otherwise. We would like to make the public as much television-minded as possible."[15]

Despite all of the attention awarded the world's fair telecast and other RCA broadcasts, including coverage of the 1940 Republican and Democratic national conventions, a market did not develop.[16] Buyer apathy was understandable. The nation was barely recovering from the Great Depression. The cost of receivers was high, up to six hundred dollars for a 12-inch set; the average annual per capita income was less than seven hundred dollars.[17] Those who could afford to purchase a TV had to put up with limited schedules of programming. And there was a regulatory hazard. Although the FCC had sanctioned RCA's telecasts, the commission waited until May 1941 to establish the new medium's broadcast standard. Purchasers risked buying an expensive receiver that in a short period might be obsolete. These anxieties persisted immediately after the war.[18]

Nor did most rival manufacturers support RCA. Few relished having to pay fees for RCA's transmission and reception patents. (A Zenith spokesperson calculated that RCA held 50% of all of the TV patents in 1940.)[19] Much as Sarnoff, whose ego expanded greatly with time, regarded himself as the industry leader, competitors deeply mistrusted him. RCA's monopoly over key radio patents in the 1920s had created enormous ill will for the company. Sarnoff's rivals remembered too well RCA's recent past.[20]

RCA refused to retreat. Although America's entry into World War II suspended TV set production, war-related research allowed RCA and others to make substantial improvements in television technology, notably a means of mass-manufacturing the cathode-ray tube, the critical component to home receivers.[21] Those happy few with sets could view telecasts in the largest cities. The loaning of sets to various veterans hospitals was an attempt to fuel demand once peace returned, as was Sarnoff's speech making on behalf of the newest medium. With the war

over, RCA sought to prepare public opinion. Under the direction of the J. Walter Thompson agency, RCA launched an ambitious institutional advertising campaign promoting the company's research on television, followed by one encouraging consumers to visit dealers and examine the newest household technology. The RCA set's "exclusive Eye Witness picture synchronizer gives you brighter, clearer, steadier pictures. . . . You'll have to see it to believe it!"[22]

Yet sales failed to take off. In October 1945, NBC president Niles Trammell had assured a group of major advertising agents that four hundred thousand homes would have televisions by late 1946. Less than half that number were manufactured that year. RCA could take solace in one wartime story. The ban on TV receiver manufacture hampered efforts to donate sets to army and navy hospitals. Seeking to buy back sets, RCA made a great discovery. Few owners were willing to part with them, Alva Johnston of the *Saturday Evening Post* reported. "Nobody would sell even a broken set for less than the original cost."[23]

The prospect of television left most rival manufacturers torn. A few, like General Electric and the tiny company operated by the inventor Allen Du Mont, approached RCA in their expertise in set production and enthusiasm for TV itself. Others were more resigned to television manufacturing. Many would have preferred to stick to what they knew. Philco, for example, had overtaken RCA in radio receiver sales. But an overproduction of radios immediately after the war caused prices to fall and a sharp decline in profits. Manufacturers could earn far more money on television sets, if the TV boom ever arrived.[24]

NBC's major competitor in broadcasting, CBS, concentrated its energies on radio. Although CBS had, like NBC, experimented with television before the war, owner William S. Paley had little interest in the medium, certainly not compared to Sarnoff.[25] Nor did CBS have an electronics division until 1949 or the self-interest RCA had that justified TV's promotion. "RCA stands to make a pile of money out of the television industry," *Fortune* declared in 1948.[26] If anything, Paley and others tried to buy themselves time. CBS petitioned for FCC transmission standards that would have delayed television manufacture and reversed RCA's head start.[27]

Nonetheless, NBC would not enter television broadcasting uncontested. Du Mont launched a network—consisting of two stations—in 1946. CBS, which had been operating a channel in New York City, soon followed. ABC required a special stock issue, a loan from the Prudential

Insurance Company, and revenues from its profitable radio operations to commence television operations two years later.[28]

Establishing a television network was a two-step process. The first required securing television licenses. The FCC then limited the number of stations an individual or corporation could own to five. To maximize the earnings potential of "owned and operated" stations, three of the five should be in the largest viewing areas, New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. At the same time, a network would begin to produce programming for its own stations as well as affiliates.

Everyone understood that investment in programming had to come first, before consumers or advertisers would embrace the new technology. "There will be no advertisers to foot program bills until the public is supplied with sets, and the only certain way of selling sets is to increase the quantity and quality of programs offered," *Fortune* observed in 1939.[29] The wartime fare of "ancient travel films, cookery classes, puppet shows, second rate vaudeville acts," *Newsweek* radio editor Robert Conly wrote in 1944, would not suffice. "When 60 percent of the people in a survey say they will buy a good television receiver at $200, they are probably assuming a quality of program which does not exist today."[30]

RCA and Du Mont obviously had a greater immediate interest: popular programming would promote the sales of TV sets. (In 1947, RCA manufactured four-fifths of all TVs sold.)[31] As expected, all the networks lost money in their first years. Yet for both RCA and Du Mont, receiver sales more than offset these costs. In 1948, Du Mont lost $1.4 million from its network operations; total company gross income, however, driven mainly by sales of Du Mont televisions, more than doubled from $11.2 to $26.9 million.[32]

All four of the networks, in at least one critical regard, expected television to resemble radio. TV would rapidly become a mass medium and prove profitable by selling airtime to advertisers. "Certainly there can be no collecting at the receiving end," Allen B. Du Mont wrote in 1943. "For the public buys the teleset once and expects a free show from that day on. The collecting must again [as with radio] be done at the transmitting end, and that means sponsored programs with their commercials or advertising aspects."[33] But this assumption required the networks to risk more of their own capital ahead of demand. Some advertisers helped to cover only part of the initial start-up costs by sponsoring some of the first programs, while some limited their purchases of TV time. Many more waited.

The Skeptics

Not everyone thought history would repeat itself. The Zenith Corporation and several large film studios did not believe that the radio networks were equal to the challenge of producing television programming capable of capturing a mass audience and retaining them over time. The costs could be expected to be far greater than for radio, too great for advertisers. Hollywood had raised Americans' expectations for visual representation. "Television," one source told Alva Johnston, "has to compete with the talking pictures, and cannot succeed unless it furnishes entertainment equal to Hollywood."[34] And the radio networks had no experience in visual production. A TV program would require costuming and sets. For on-air talent, the transition would be much more work. Rehearsal time would increase exponentially; lines and blocking would have to be learned. In theory this was no hurdle for performers from the theater and Hollywood. Yet the very appeal of radio for some had been that it made relatively few demands on its players, who could appear in street clothes and read from scripts. A film star only had to learn that part of the script being shot on a given day. A thirty- or sixty-minute teleplay would be broadcast in real time—lines *had* to be memorized. "The television actor," Alva Johnston wrote in 1946, "requires an elephant memory."[35]

Some planners grossly inflated the costs of television operations. A prewar forecast suggested television programs would cost ten to fifteen times as much as radio productions.[36] A 1945 dry run by the staff of WTMJ, a radio station owned by the *Milwaukee Journal*, was especially alarming. The WTMJ staff attempted to estimate the time and manpower required to produce programming. A one-hour program originating from WTMJ's studio, the staff determined, would require from twelve to sixteen hours of rehearsal for camera operators; the number of off-camera personnel would have to be increased. Thirteen men, *Journal* executive L. W. Herzog calculated, would be "absolutely necessary to produce a very simple, easy type of television show." Herzog's estimate did not include on-camera talent. "When you add sight to sound," Herzog wrote, "you increase production and technical problems many times over the problems you meet in sound alone."[37] WTMJ-TV went on the air in December 1947 (it was the Cream City's first television station) and did indeed lose money its first twenty-two months. Not until January 1951 did the Journal Company recover the station's accumulated losses.[38]

Television's homesteaders only permitted so much red ink. Of the four networks, NBC was in the best position to spend—and spend lavishly—on TV production. Yet even NBC was hamstrung, ironically, by Sarnoff. While committing millions in television technology, Sarnoff never liked devoting substantial expenditures on the productions that could help to popularize it. (The 1939 world's fair telecast was almost canceled when RCA refused to pay $120 for scaffolding for the camera.)[39] As a result, all four networks initially offered a mix of programming, most of it characterized by its cheapness. "With certain notable exceptions," a *Fortune* writer observed, TV programs have been "middling to awful." No operation was more threadbare than Du Mont's. Its Washington station, NBC vice president Frank Russell complained in 1947, aired twelve-year-old newsreels as well as propaganda films "from various foreign countries." "Du Mont has been on the air here for only a year," Russell wrote, "and has done an awful job."[40]

A strategic alliance with a major studio offered a cost-effective alternative. A large film company like MGM or 20th Century Fox was far better equipped than any radio network to fashion visual imagery, something that NBC understood as early as the 1930s. One executive reported in 1935 having become "more convinced than ever that film will play a ninety percent part in our television productions of the future."[41] RCA briefly owned an interest in a major studio in the early 1930s, RKO Radio Pictures. More than once, Sarnoff and other RCA and NBC executives met with major movie makers in the 1940s.

The large studios rejected any combination. "What have you got to offer us?" the head of MGM imperiously asked Sarnoff. "*We've* got the pictures."[42] The film executives thought they could afford to be condescending. Preliminary studies indicated that it would take many years and considerable capital to connect stations by cable for simultaneous broadcast. More correctly, they understood that their stable of stars would not want to relocate to New York, where initial network programming would originate.[43]

The bigger studios decided on a defensive strategy. Contracts began reserving to them any distribution of feature films to television outlets. Rejected was the suggestion by a trade group in 1937 that a studio acquire a radio network—one became available in 1943—to use as a springboard for television.[44] Paramount Pictures owned TV stations in Los Angeles and Chicago. Paramount also invested in Du Mont Laboratories, but not enough to make Du Mont competitive; it proved a

wretched marriage that ultimately destroyed the network.[45] Although United Artists and some smaller production companies entered TV production,[46] the largest filmmakers—MGM, Warner Brothers, RKO, Paramount, and 20th Century Fox—spurned the future. They not only refrained from direct participation in the production of programs, but refused to sell their more recent—and more desirable—inventory of feature films.

The Big Five paid dearly. Television spread quickly in the late 1940s and early 1950s, notably in the larger urban markets that accounted for a disproportionate share of the national filmgoing audience. Movie box office receipts plummeted. Television was hardly the sole cause of Hollywood's malaise. Indeed, attendance was already declining when Americans began purchasing televisions, and fell in areas not yet served by television at rates comparable to those that had TV. Hollywood was losing some of its core audience. Various factors caused younger Americans, the most frequent theater patrons, to marry and start families. Going to the movies became increasingly problematic.[47]

That their industry was already in deep trouble was part of the movie executives' problem. Most would not acknowledge, at least publicly, the possibility that television would only worsen matters, transforming a head cold into bronchitis. Instead, they convinced themselves that they needed only to rededicate themselves to their established business and create more appealing feature films, especially ones shot on location. "There's stuff you can't get in television," producer Darryl F. Zanuck remarked.[48] But this premature diagnosis failed to stem the decline in theater revenues. In the long run, no single factor contributed so greatly to the decline of film attendance as the spread of television. Among those who purchased televisions in a New Jersey community, movie attendance fell 77 percent.[49]

It is worth presenting a counterfactual scenario here: Jack Warner of Warner Brothers in 1946 or 1947 sees the future and wants a piece of the action. He understands, as later analysts would realize, that his company was not in the movie business but the *entertainment* industry.[50] Whether a Warners product was seen in a movie house or a living room, it would still be a Warners product. With this realization, Warner Brothers could have responded in two ways. It could have struck a partnership with one of the radio networks planning to enter TV and begun producing programming. Or it could have taken an even bolder course, by applying to the FCC for TV licenses in the largest cities as

the first step toward the creation of its own network. Major market frequencies were limited but available, albeit briefly. Neither development occurred.

Perhaps the film companies' caution was well placed. Television's programming needs were enormous, far greater than any one studio could fulfill. One network in 1950, an ad agency reported, produced just under sixty-nine hours of programming during one week. One of the largest studios, 20th Century Fox, released just over sixty-eight hours of film *a year.* Even if one could increase production fiftyfold, costs would have to be contained. The same survey estimated network costs of $231 per minute compared to the studio expense of $10,000 per minute.[51] In retrospect, a network alliance would have been sensible. It would have limited the film company's risks, while permitting the studio to take advantage of a network's enormous experience as an exhibitor, that is, dealing with affiliates and advertisers.

Several studios actually did consider entering television directly. Warners, Fox, MGM, and cartoonist Walt Disney's then modest studio all applied for TV licenses immediately after the war, only to drop out of the game almost as quickly.[52] The filmmakers' ultimate intentions remain unclear. Did any anticipate operating a network competing with NBC and others? In late 1948, 20th Century Fox negotiated to purchase ABC.[53] Did some suspect, as others did, that a network interconnection would prove less important with TV than with radio? A Fox or Warners TV station in a large market like San Francisco might prove quite profitable by relying heavily on programming culled from the studio vault. Nonnetwork stations like Chicago's WGN and New York's WPIX made money following this practice.[54]

A variation of these expectations involved theatrical television, projecting televised images on large theater screens. Theater TV would allow the studios to continue to distribute their product through theaters, many of which they controlled. RCA actually approached the studios about developing large-screen televisions. Having weighed entering television directly, Harry Warner of Warner Brothers concluded, according to an executive in mid–1947, that the studios "would be better off to develop television in connection with the motion picture theaters."[55] Unfortunately for Warner and others, time was not on their side. Theater television was still a work in progress when the TV set boom commenced in 1948. "Home" television was out of the gate.[56]

The larger film companies' caution had multiple explanations. First, the efforts of CBS and others to use FCC proceedings to delay TV's diffusion, while aimed at RCA, may have discouraged film companies by creating too much uncertainty about broadcast standards.[57] Then, too, a series of problems besetting Hollywood immediately after the war, notably ones involving labor strife, distracted mightily from long-range planning. At the same time, the Justice Department, charging the largest studios with violating antitrust laws, secured a court decree in 1948 that compelled them to reform booking and distribution practices. Theaters owned by the studios had to be sold. Justice Department officials in turn encouraged the FCC to consider the film companies' antitrust infractions before granting any TV licenses.[58] Meanwhile, film attendance was falling across the country.

In this environment the industry fell back on a more conservative strategy. There would be no direct competition with the networks. Let them be the pioneers. Most of those in Hollywood then waited for one of several outcomes. The most hoped-for scenario was that TV would prove a fad: The new medium would lose its appeal because it was unable to fashion the sophisticated visual images Hollywood had produced for decades, a judgment that TV appeared to confirm nightly. Consumers in turn would resume their moviegoing habit. Some observers shared the conviction of E. F. McDonald of Zenith. The radio model of advertiser-supported programming would not work for the home screen. Sponsors simply could not afford to underwrite the costs of productions of sufficient quality to hold viewers. "We cannot expect the advertisers of America to pay this bill," McDonald remarked in late 1939. The only home-based alternative would be a pay or subscription television system, which could afford the higher-priced film colony product, either a recent theatrical release or a special production.[59]

Although none of these alternatives came to pass, and Hollywood lost millions, the studio heads were not quite as stupid as some in the press and elsewhere portrayed them. That is, film executives were no dimmer than their contemporary counterparts at other major American corporations. Their behavior was bounded by their experience, and the rules by which their industry had thrived. One of the key rules classified broadcasting as a useful but secondary medium. It was a promotional vehicle for films and contract players who appeared in radio shows. Yet it was little more than a publicity medium. Radio listening was some-

thing regular movie patrons did at home. They still went to films. Indeed, some film executives insisted that at least part of the demand for movies was explained by the need many consumers, especially women, had to get out of the house.[60] The motion picture industry had survived the spread of radio in the 1920s and 1930s and could be expected to prosper in a video age. Indeed, a 1950 study, based on the latest survey research, concluded that increases in income and decreases in the work week, among other factors, would foster an expansion in movie attendance.[61]

Such rosy scenarios caused the Big Five to wait too long, until the mid–1950s, before entering into negotiations with the networks. By that time, they had lost the leverage they might have enjoyed a decade earlier; they were mere "content providers." It need not have been that way, Pat Weaver of NBC remembered. The film companies might have challenged the networks. Instead, "the studios [went] from the top of the world to well deserved bankruptcy, take-over, and the shame of show business, to be run by agents."[62]

In contrast, newspaper publishers all but applauded television's coming. Daily papers had been among the earliest to operate radio stations in their communities. They had done so initially because of their commitment to civic institution building. It was a public service that also promoted their publications. Investing in television, an *Editor and Publisher* reporter explained, "affords an opportunity to carry out the principal function of a newspaper, public service. The community expects its newspaper to take the lead in furnishing it with this colorful medium of news and entertainment."[63] Simply put, launching a station created goodwill. When the *St. Louis Post–Dispatch* established the city's first TV service, KSD-TV, one man told the station manager that KSD "is the greatest thing the Post-Dispatch has done for St. Louis in twenty-five years."[64] What was *not* discussed—at least at any length—was the possibility that television might harm the daily newspaper. Most publishers engaged in wishful thinking informed by the most recent precedent. Their radio properties had proven profitable—and no threat to circulation. Television held the same prospect. "Right now television has the insidious influence of a novelty," *Editor and Publisher* editorialized in 1949. "Viewers stay glued to the set and all other things are hushed up or forgotten while a program is on. But so it was with radio, also, in its birthings. After the novelty has worn off this miraculous device and people begin to accept it as another medium of entertainment, which it is primarily, then TV owners will become selective in their

viewing just as they are now selective in radio listening."[65] "I believe the time devoted to watching television will be lessened by most set owners as the novelty of watching the program wears off," an aide reassured the publisher of the *St. Louis Post–Dispatch*.[66] Less sanguine publishers hoped TV station ownership would compensate for newspaper revenues lost to television. Whether defeatist or, more often, synergistic, newspaper owners were among the first to seek television licenses. Such large-city dailies as the *Atlanta Journal*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, *Milwaukee Journal*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *St. Louis Post–Dispatch*, and *Washington Star* were among the first to run stations in their cities.[67] In 1950, 42 percent of all television licenses were affiliated with newspapers.[68]

Related was the view of some publishers that newspapers' news gathering and advertising sales personnel could be transferred to television, while promoting the papers themselves. The *Detroit News* expected news and sportscasts on its station, WWJ-TV, to highlight the paper's coverage of the same stories, with *News* reporters doing on-air appearances. "Knowledge and authority will carry newspaper personnel over the jumps in television even if the physical attributes are lacking, but the latter will help a lot," WWJ's station manager explained.[69] The *Baltimore Sun*'s WMAR-TV aired *Sun Carrier Sagas*, in which *Sun* newspaper carriers shared colorful stories from their routes.[70]

Time Inc., which published *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune* magazines, proved more tentative. Owner Henry R. Luce did weigh either founding or buying a television network, possibly with Hollywood producer David O. Selznick as a partner. His company had produced the popular *March of Time* radio news program and motion picture newsreel, though it had never operated any radio stations. *The March of Time* enjoyed a brief run on the small screen. And *Life* sponsored NBC's modest coverage of the 1948 Olympics and more ambitious telecasts of the 1948 national conventions. Eventually, Time Inc. began acquiring television stations, only to realize, to Luce's disgust, that the stations' dependence on the networks for programming gave the company little control over what they aired.[71]

"Gee, I Wish I Had a Television Set"

Amid all the hesitation and false starts came some good news. During the war, RCA scientists had perfected a new image orthicon camera tube for the War Department. The development helped the infant in-

dustry in two ways. First, because cameras would require far less light, studios no longer had to be hothouses. TV's intense lighting had made the earliest productions a virtual hell for performers and others working on the set. An NBC floor manager reportedly lost eight to ten pounds per show. "On the air," remembered one actress, "we were shining, sweating thespians." Performers had to wear thick makeup that off-camera had made them resemble Mardi Gras mimes. (In one experimental telecast, the singer Dinah Shore remembered being "made up like some kind of clown.") At the same time, the new cameras provided set owners a clearer picture. Consumer caution tied to unhappiness with reception quality began to lessen.[72]

Less easily reconciled technical obstacles also confronted the networks. Direct network transmission to stations required a special coaxial cable connection. AT&T had the authority to lay the cable, but not the time. Initially, for example, only five of NBC's stations—New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, and Schenectady—had direct links. The coaxial cable did not reach stations in larger midwestern cities until early 1949. Between September 1948 and January 1949, the midwestern stations had their own network "feed," separate from New York. When the Cleveland Indians faced the Boston Braves in the 1948 World Series, stations in the Northeast aired the games played in Boston. Midwest viewers could only see the games that Cleveland hosted.[73]

Until a station secured a direct network feed, it faced the daunting challenge of filling schedules. The simplest and most cost-effective response was to limit broadcast hours by offering no programming at certain times of the day and late at night. Lacking direct network connections, Los Angeles's six stations in April 1949 had short broadcast days. Channel 2 only operated five nights a week. On April 12, Channel 9 ceased broadcasting after 6:00 p.m. Channels 2, 4, and 5 telecast nothing after 9:30 p.m.; Channel 11's last program appeared at 10:00 p.m., and it was off the air entirely on April 13. Channel 7 showed a test pattern and played music from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.[74]

When on the air, nonconnected stations carried recordings of some network programs, older films, or their own productions. Depending on the status of the station, recordings of network programs—"kinescopes," an uneven precursor to videotape—were available one to two weeks after their original telecast.[75] Until the cable reached California, one advertising agent explained, area set owners "will have to be content with the fuzzy quality of the kinescope or filmed version of New York

programs."[76] Bob Hope's 1950 Christmas Eve special held great promise, the *Los Angeles Times* TV critic Walter Ames wrote. Hope's guests would include Eleanor Roosevelt narrating a holiday story for children. "Unfortunately, we'll be about two weeks late in seeing this show."[77]

At other hours, stations could choose from a small and largely unattractive inventory of older feature films from a few distributors. These included the British producer Alexander Korda and the American movie actor William Boyd. The latter had secured the TV rights to most of the Hopalong Cassidy films in which he had starred. Unlike Korda's features, many of which had been lavishly mounted and commanded critical praise, the cheaply made and melodramatic "Hoppy" films found an audience. Indeed, in Los Angeles, Hoppy was the top-rated program for more than a year.[78] And television granted Boyd a momentary celebrity he had never achieved on the big screen, especially among the youngest viewers. "The old Hoppy movies had never sent any motion-picture audiences home with stars in their eyes," *Time* commented, "but they electrified the junior television slave."[79] *Life* observed, "Hopalong has become an economic colossus, born of television's desperate need for ready-made programs."[80]

Left to their own devices, stations presented an odd menu. WMAL in Washington, D.C., filled airtime in November 1947 by telecasting Senate hearings on the Marshall Plan to aid Europe; it marked the first telecast of a congressional proceeding.[81] Over the Memorial Day, July Fourth, and Labor Day holidays in 1948, Chicago's WMAQ hired a helicopter and, with the aid of a Cook County deputy sheriff, reported on traffic conditions for viewers in the Second City. Following what had become standard radio practice, virtually every station produced programs for children, usually with a host pretending to be a railroad engineer, sheriff, cowboy, or circus clown. A few drew critical praise, like KTLA's *Time for Beany* in Los Angeles. WMAQ's *Kukla, Fran, and Ollie* had so many fans—and adult admirers—that it became a network show.[82] For homemakers came cooking shows. WTNH in New Haven installed a kitchen in one of its two studios.[83] Los Angeles's KTTV produced a video version of the newspaper jobs listings, *Classified Column*, weekdays at 4:30. After a hundred programs, KTTV claimed to have found work for some 3,750 viewers.[84] The same channel aired the long-running *Calo's Pet Exchange*, which introduced animals for adoption.[85] ABC's Chicago station produced a home repair show, *Dr. Fix-Um*, that briefly joined the network schedule.[86] Some stations catered to regional

culture. WOAI in San Antonio offered *Square Dancing* on Thursdays from 7 to 7:15, hosted by Rickey Holden, "a well-known square dance leader," *Variety* reported.[87] Occasionally, stations in larger markets displayed the cultural aspirations of the networks. KTTV presented a one-hour version of *Macbeth* in 1949. "Astounding vigor is being captured in the condensation," the *Los Angeles Times* reported.[88]

Not until the fall of 1948 did the networks begin to fill their evening schedules with regular programming. All in all, the four networks' offerings were strikingly segmented. That is, programs often targeted specific viewers instead of a broad audience.

The schedulers initially tried to attract adult male viewers by presenting hours of sports programming. "The sports fan should be the hottest video supporter," wrote a *Washington Post* reporter in late 1947. "Boxing, wrestling, bowling, track meets, horse racing, baseball, football and even fencing are available in season at the flip of the wrist. The only parking worry is who can grab the lounge chair first."[89] Indeed, in January 1948, no other type of fare so populated the schedule; it accounted for 16 percent of the programming on New York City's stations. That fall, ABC telecast four hours of sports a week; NBC, 6.5 hours; CBS, 7.5 hours; and Du Mont, 8 hours. Wrestling (7 hours) and boxing (7.25 hours) matches were the most telecast, though ABC and CBS each aired two hours of basketball a week. The dominance of sports was even greater after 9:00 p.m. when presumably younger children had gone to bed and fathers had more control over what was watched. On Saturday nights, only basketball was available; on Fridays after 9:00, wrestling competed with *Gillette Cavalcade of Sports.* On Wednesdays, three of the four networks carried sports.[90] NBC interrupted its extended coverage of the 1948 Republican national convention to air the Joe Louis–Jersey Joe Walcott boxing match.[91] The next year, CBS regularly telecast sporting events at New York's Madison Square Garden; among its most successful originations was the Westminster Kennel Club Show.[92]

A few believed a reliance on such programs would be a permanent feature of the newest medium. *Philadelphia Inquirer* publisher Walter Annenberg purchased the city's major arena, and on an adjacent lot in 1947, built his station's TV studios. Annenberg, *Editor and Publisher* reported, "is of the opinion that newspapers, operating many of the nation's leading radio centers, will need eventually to control and operate leading sports centers of the country, this through the advent of television, which will carry sports into millions of American homes."[93]

For TV's pioneers, sports telecasts had other advantages. They were cost efficient. A network need only set up a camera at an arena to air a match, though five were used for the June 1946 airing of the Joe Louis–Billy Conn match at Yankee Stadium.[94] No sets had to be constructed. In that regard, airing a boxing card could be likened to the networks' telecasting of a United Nations session or a congressional hearing: a relatively inexpensive means of filling the schedule.[95] Rights fees for most sporting events were modest. In 1948, most colleges only charged twenty-five hundred dollars per telecast. That year, the New York football Giants asked NBC for twenty-five thousand dollars for the rights to telecast their games.[96] At the same time, the networks had little difficulty locating advertisers, led by the Gillette Razor Company, which coveted male viewers drawn to sports programming. As with radio, Gillette found sports telecasts an unusually effective means of product promotion. Individual stations could count on area brewers.[97]

Concentrating on the male viewer also possessed a particular logic. Making television especially appealing to them made sense given their role in decisions over the purchase of major appliances. One-third of 102 New York City set owners surveyed in the late 1940s said the availability of sports programming was the largest single influence on their decision to purchase a television. Believing that sports telecasts would create demand for the newest medium, CBS in May 1947 briefly canceled its earliest regular television productions in favor of "actuality broadcasts" of sports and special events.[98]

Sports fans who put off buying a set faced a dilemma. Some cultivated the goodwill of those few who had TVs at home. "When I got my TV," one of the first set owners in Manhattan recalled, "I was the fair-haired boy on the block. When there was a big fight, everybody called, 'Can I come up for a few minutes?'"[99] In a December 1948 radio sketch, the tightfisted Jack Benny uses binoculars to observe a boxing match that his next door neighbors are watching. "Oh darn it," Jack complained. "The Colmans pulled their shade down. Gee, I wish I had a television set."[100]

Many more went to their neighborhood taverns. Compared to many of their patrons, most bar owners could easily justify the expense of purchasing a television. A major event, like the Louis-Conn fight, promised a packed house. One bar, the *New Yorker* reported, was jammed with several hundred regulars who paid a cover charge to take in the telecast on a 20-inch Du Mont receiver. During the rounds, the bartender

lowered the lights to improve the viewing. Drinks were only served between rounds. Comic Henny Youngman joked about a job listing, "Bartender wanted; must be able to fix TV set."[101] A June 1947 New York City survey found that installing a TV increased a bar's business 30 to 60 percent. In Chicago taverns with televisions, *Time* concluded, "customers tend to drink more, but slower." Hollywood drinking holes with televisions were successfully competing with night clubs. "Television," wrote one journalist, "is the biggest thing that's happened to the bar-and-tavern business since the free lunch."[102]

Television temporarily boosted the following of on-air sports, with the exception of basketball. Although boxing had always been popular in the largest cities, interest reportedly rose in places like Richmond.[103] The inventors of roller derby faced failure ("It began as the flop of the ages," wrote *New York Times* sportswriter Arthur Daley) until promoters allowed it to be televised. "Its rough-and-tumble charms thus were shown to those who never before had suspected its existence," Daley observed. And patrons began filling New York's 69th Regiment Armory to watch the contests; producers had to add matinee matches.[104]

Wrestling especially benefited from the video exposure. A Los Angeles station first made this great telegenic discovery as it groped for programming options in 1942. Professional wrestlers, with their calling in decline, transformed matches into staged events; elaborately costumed, they proved perfectly suited to television. The most famous was Gorgeous George, his long hair curled and dyed blonde. "I do not think I'm gorgeous," he insisted, "but what's my opinion against millions of others?" Many viewers, young and old, male and female, were fascinated. The historian Richard O. Davies recalled how, as a ten-year-old, he walked by a small-town appliance store only to be transfixed by a wrestling match being shown on a television set. "The young boy had never seen a wrestling match before, and the wild antics of the performers were captivating." He was so captivated that he stayed and watched past his curfew, to his parents' fury. Similarly hooked was maestro Arturo Toscanini, who made his dinner guests take in wrestling matches. "As a sport, professional wrestling long ago was finished," observed the *New York Times*'s Jack Gould. "As low comedy, it survives on TV and has admirers."[105]

The most powerful, sports-related incentive for purchasing a TV set was also the most traditional. For decades, professional baseball had been the nation's most popular spectator sport. Not surprisingly, KSTP

in St. Paul followed its inaugural telecast, of a "T-Day" banquet, with a Minneapolis-Louisville AAA game. Atlanta's WSB aired games of the Atlanta Crackers, the city's minor league team.[106] Network affiliates and retailers heavily publicized telecasts of the World Series, beginning in 1947. For good reason: sports fans had an excuse to purchase a receiver. Contemporary observers, including CBS chairman William S. Paley, attributed the first sustained interest in television to the telecasting of the 1947 fall classic.[107] One Detroit area department store chain reported selling more TVs in the two weeks prior to the airing of the 1948 World Series, the first aired in the Motor City, than it had in the previous two years.[108] Direct network connection arrived in Los Angeles three years later, just before the Series. Retailers played up the timing. The special price for a GE set, one newspaper ad announced, was "Just the *Ticket* for the WORLD SERIES."[109] Given the promotional promise of the greatest game on earth, the networks initially pooled their coverage. No network had exclusive rights.[110]

Within a year, sports retreated from the schedule at most networks. The networks began investing in entertainment shows that cost more but promised to draw a larger audience. (Boxing continued to be aired and secured respectable, sometimes spectacular, ratings.)[111] Although a financially hard-pressed ABC actually increased its sports programming, the other three networks greatly reduced theirs. In the fall of 1949, CBS reduced its regular athletic telecasts from 7.5 to 3.25 hours a week; NBC's fell to 2 hours. Du Mont nearly halved its sports programming to 4.25 hours.[112] Local stations, however, continued to regard sports telecasts—especially baseball, with its long schedule—as an irresistible means of filling a schedule. In Miami, a few years later, area Ford dealers sponsored the first telecast of a jai alai game.[113]

Another example of programming for a subgroup had one significant advantage comparable to sports broadcasts: children's programs were relatively inexpensive to produce. They ran for fifteen to thirty minutes and usually had a male host who was not a star and who, therefore, came cheap. But kids' shows proved more resilient than sports broadcasts. Puppets, which for centuries had captivated children at fairs and carnivals, were often supporting players. And they took up less space than human costars, a serious advantage given the cramped size of the first TV studios.[114] Shows included children in the audience, some of whom might be interviewed. Du Mont began the children's parade with *Small Fry Club* in March 1947, hosted by Big Brother Bob. Like many subse-

quent shows, *Small Fry* appeared in the early evening, from 7:00 to 8:00 (ET).[115] Chicago station WBKB produced *Junior Jamboree* beginning in October 1947. A one-hour show aired weekdays from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m., *Jamboree* developed a substantial following. One telephone survey indicated that just over 58 percent of all televisions were tuned to the program in early December 1947.[116]

The first great national success in children's programming came in late 1947, with *Howdy Doody*. Howdy was a marionette, a freckled boy in western attire. The animate lead was Buffalo Bob Smith, a young and highly energetic radio performer from upstate New York. Together with other puppets and actors, including Clarabell the Clown and Princess Summerfall Winterspring, Howdy and Bob daily performed slapstick sketches often involving chases and a seltzer bottle, though never guns, around the small set. These delighted their audience in the Peanut Gallery.[117] Old silent film shorts were aired. The only serious moments, aside from some advertising copy, were Bob's gentle reminders to children to obey their parents and other adults. The program's success was first demonstrated when the show in March 1948 launched a "Howdy Doody for President" campaign. (Howdy's platform included two Christmases and a one-day school year.) In March 1948, Buffalo Bob offered a free Howdy Doody for President button to any child who wrote to one of the five stations carrying the program. It proved a brilliant marketing ploy (and an opportunity to explain the electoral process). More than sixty thousand children requested pins. That represented one-third of the TV sets in the country. Howdy Doody, an enthusiastic Jack Gould of the *New York Times* declared, "belongs to the elite of broadcasting."[118]

True to everyone's expectations for television, NBC had to invest, albeit modestly, ahead of advertiser interest. The network in turn used the massive response to sell commercials on the program. Advertiser demand did not account for *Howdy Doody*'s debut. Although companies coveting the very young eventually rushed to carry ads on the program, *Howdy Doody* had no sponsors during its first weeks.[119] Once established, *Howdy Doody*'s popularity did not abate. A survey for NBC's Washington, D.C., station indicated that 46.5 percent of all televisions were tuned to the program in early 1949. Pregnant women requested tickets for the Peanut Gallery four years in advance.[120]

Children's programming had several explanations. One was the new medium's tendency to imitate its older sibling; radio had long car-

ried programs for the young. Bob Smith had starred in a children's radio program on Saturdays, where he had developed the character of Howdy. And children's fare tended to be relatively inexpensive. "*Howdy* was never a big-budgeted show, even in its prime," recalled its chief writer. And many of TV's earliest executives and station managers were relatively young men with children. "My kids will watch *a test pattern*," remarked one NBC producer. Television had to offer *them* something. Wives, expected to prepare dinner, wanted something to keep the children out of their way.[121]

NBC's freckled marionette undoubtedly boosted TV set sales, though the leverage of the child consumer in 1948 and 1949 should not be overstated. That television's introduction coincided with the baby boom did benefit set manufacturers. Parents with young children were among the first to purchase sets. That said, purchasing a TV represented a major expenditure for most families. It would not be made solely for the children, no matter how much they clamored for a television. It was considerably cheaper for parents to buy their daughter a new bike or fancy dollhouse. Surveys of the first set owners suggested that programming had to appeal to entire families, not just the children. Boxing matches and *Howdy Doody* attracted distinct segments of the audience.[122]

A more encompassing demonstration of TV's potential popularity, again at NBC, soon followed. As the network sought to fill its evening schedule, it found a sponsor, Texaco, willing to underwrite a Tuesday evening variety program. As with *Howdy Doody*, not much would be spent. The Texaco program initially cost $5,750 a week to produce.[123] The variety show itself was a radio concept. A host, usually a singer or comedian, would do an opening monologue and then introduce various acts. Acrobats and trained animals were especially fitting for TV.

Who would host the show? Television might hold great potential for show business's top stars, but it was a promise that had yet to be realized. Too few homes had TVs to attract those in radio or on film used to performing before mass audiences. The packed house was an expectation. Then, too, with few exceptions, television shows were originating in New York. And with very few dissenters, popular radio performers and motion picture stars lived in Los Angeles. They had no desire to move east. At different points in their professional lives, New York City had been critical to their careers. But with motion picture production and most radio originations in California, New York had lost its centrality. Moreover, it lacked southern California's many conveniences:

the weather, the then easy year-round access to beaches and golf. Even those from the New York area, like the singer Frank Sinatra, found California to be paradise. "I remember how crazy you used to be about living in California," Jack Benny said to Sinatra during a 1951 television show. "You used to say you wouldn't want to live anywhere else." "That's right Jack," Sinatra replied.[124]

This left NBC and Texaco with few choices. They had to locate a New York–based personality if only on a temporary basis to host the program. Indeed, Texaco planned to have four different performers emcee the program on an alternating basis. To inaugurate the first program, they settled on Milton Berle, who was starring in a Texaco-sponsored program on ABC Radio. The thirty-nine-year-old Berle had a long career in show business, beginning in vaudeville. But he had enjoyed little success in film or radio (his first five radio shows had been canceled). His bad luck extended to Broadway. *Spring in Brazil*, in which he was to star, never opened. Berle called it "death with scenery."[125] All in all, he lacked the stature of a Jack Benny or an Eddie Cantor, neither of whom would yet do a TV program.[126] But Berle had developed a night club revue, immensely popular in New York and Miami. This was no small achievement; one Berle venue seated a thousand guests. And his admirers included the popular syndicated columnist Damon Runyon, who repeatedly praised Berle. Runyon in 1941 had dubbed Berle "one of the great comedians of this generation." Berle's shtick might work well on the small screen. "I cannot remember that he ever gave me a dull evening," Runyon wrote in 1946.[127]

The Texaco Star Theater Vaudeville Show debuted June 8, 1948, in a radio studio at Rockefeller Center. It was to be a trial run until Texaco and its advertising agency finalized the exact format of the program and found a permanent host for the fall; NBC played little role in the launch. Berle was one of seven emcees who traded off hosting the program that summer.[128] Berle won the test. By the fall, he was the permanent host, and very much in charge. He was the de facto director and even oversaw the musical arrangements.[129]

Nervously left to his own devices, the comic constructed the program as a video version of his night club show and vaudeville. The program opened with Berle delivering a monologue. Unlike some prominent radio comedians, Berle had a scattershot approach. He would tell ten jokes in hope that *some* of them would actually prompt laughter. "Nobody can tell so many jokes, good and bad, in any space of time as

Berle can," one journalist observed. His comedy normally consisted of wisecracks as well as insults directed at members of the audience—or himself. He commenced one program reading a telegram from a Detroit viewer. "Television is looking for new faces and as soon we get a new one, we're going to send it to you." Berle then introduced five different acts, which, much as he had in his stage and night club shows, he saw fit to interrupt. He would reappear yet again, often in outrageous costumes, frequently in drag. "If it's true that behind every great man there is a great woman," the TV writer Larry Gelbart cracked, "Berle was very often both of them."[130]

The put-downs, whether directed at himself or some poor soul in the front row, conveyed the lack of subtlety in Berle's comedy. In his first years, his routines involved slapstick and a great deal of mugging. Berle's fellow comics, Steve Allen observed, believed he had more energy than talent.[131] "His whole career seemed a huge practical joke," the critic Gilbert Seldes wrote. "He always laughed first—and loudest—himself. Perhaps his show of delight in his own talents was compensation for knowing that they were of a low order."[132] Berle's style owed much to the "new humor" that had emerged earlier in the century, "more excited, more aggressive, and less sympathetic," wrote one historian of vaudeville.[133] Many of its practitioners were the children of newly arrived Jewish immigrants; their comedy, first performed on the streets of New York, frequently reflected a disrespect for authority.[134] It appalled those who championed a more sophisticated humor. But it was precisely the vaudeville and night club antecedents of Berle's show that brought him such immediate fame. Vaudeville had only recently been deposed by the newer media of sound films and radio. And countless viewers, certainly in the largest cities, remembered it fondly, as well as the more spontaneous zaniness of burlesque, smothered by censors a decade earlier. Younger ones, who could not afford to see Berle's night club act, could partake of its pleasures. They found his routines far more authentic and spirited than the comparatively bland offerings of the movie studios and radio networks. "It was the novelty of it all," one TV writer recalled. "A lot of people were discovering vaudeville and burlesque for the first time, on *The Texaco Star Theater*, and they loved it."[135]

By the fall of 1948, Berle was a sensation. NBC delayed its election night coverage one hour to air the Texaco program. Later that month, Berle had a higher audience rating, 86.7 percent, than FDR had commanded when he asked Congress to declare war on Japan. "His rating

was so big," commented one NBC executive later, that "people who did not watch Milton Berle were statistically insignificant."[136] "As the clock nears 8 along the Eastern Seaboard on Tuesday night," *Time* observed, "a strange new phenomenon takes place in U.S. urban life. Business falls off in many a night club, theater-ticket sales are light, neighborhood movie audiences thin. Some late-hour shopkeepers post signs and close up for the night. . . . For the next hour, wherever a signal from an NBC television transmitter can be picked out of the air, a large part of the population has its eyes fixed on a TV screen."[137] Hoagy Carmichael sang in a radio comedy sketch, "I bought a television set for my girl, and now she's in love with Milton Berle."[138]

Berle's video fate was closely tied to his program's New York City orientation. He laced his humor with specific references to the city and its institutions. In one sketch, he complained of being sick after a meal at a famous deli: "Every time I eat that Number Fifteen at Lindy's, meat loaf with baked beans, I get heartburn." Indeed, the program not only was produced in New York but often appeared to be written for a New York audience. This bias had its advantages in the early going. Although the New York viewing area represented about 8 percent of the national population, a February 1949 survey indicated that four out of every ten sets were in greater New York. New York's share dropped to just under a fourth a year later, yet it still dwarfed the penetration for other major metropolitan areas, especially on the West Coast. Complained a California advertising agent in October 1950, "New York still has more television receivers than the whole Pacific Coast."[139]

Nevertheless, Berle's appeal was not limited to New York. His broad humor also found fans in many if not most of America's largest cities, which happened to have television first. NBC's Washington, D.C., station in April 1949 claimed that Berle had a 72.0 rating.[140] His drawing power extended to Los Angeles. When Berle joined some other celebrities attending a Los Angeles Dons professional football game in 1949, the *Los Angeles Examiner* dubbed him "the hottest article in the entertainment world today."[141]

Even children became addicted to *The Texaco Star Theater*. Teachers complained of missed homework assignments on Wednesdays. Younger viewers, some mothers worried, became too excited after watching the show to go to bed. In September 1949 Berle urged his younger viewers to obey their "Uncle Miltie, and kiss Mommy and Daddy good night and go straight upstairs like good little boys and girls."[142]

"A Trackless Forest"

If NBC had two undisputed hits in the Berle and Howdy Doody shows, ones that helped to popularize television itself, it is noteworthy that both were show business accidents. Even network executives admitted as much. Before a group of NBC affiliates in September 1948, one confessed, "There is no program history in television—*everything* is experimental."[143] No one at NBC foresaw the phenomenal success of the Texaco and Howdy Doody shows. In both cases, intentions were upset. Howdy Doody was originally to have alternating hosts—and puppets.[144] The Texaco show had been largely thrown together. Standard Brands, which produced Chase and Sanborn Coffee and other foodstuffs, had invested far more in a variety show, *Hour Glass*, that premiered in June 1946. But *Hour Glass* came two years too early—its debut inspired all of two fan letters.[145] Moreover, *Hour Glass* lacked Uncle Miltie. That said, Texaco hardly knew Berle would assure its program's success. Texaco originally envisioned having rotating emcees. Berle was nothing more than a spot starter. (Berle himself was reluctant to accept a long-term commitment.) "TV was like a trackless forest," recalled one of his writers. "Nobody realized what was about to happen until Milton burst forth."[146]

Berle, more than any other individual, had helped to launch the long-awaited television boom. The percentage of households with televisions increased from 0.4 percent in 1948, the year of Berle's debut, to 2.3 percent in 1949, 9.0 percent in 1950, and 23.5 percent in 1951. By 1952, roughly one-third (34.2%) of all American homes had a TV.[147] Consumers *finally* had something to watch. "I didn't invent television," Berle remarked years later, "but I certainly helped to put it on the map."[148] Larry Gelbart more generously remarked, "In a fairer world, Berle would have received a royalty on every TV set ever sold from the early forties on. It was the public's enjoyment—and the education in entertainment he offered—that helped create the demand."[149]

It would later be argued that the TV boom was no accident. Some business interests and government economists had encouraged television's diffusion to promote the economic order. TV's incessant commercial messages, it was assumed, would promote prosperity and forestall another Great Depression, if not class warfare.[150] TV advertising, an RCA executive remarked in 1944, "has the power to create consumer demand and buying of goods and services beyond anything we have

heretofore known."[151] That such a nonsensical claim (radio advertising, after all, did not restore the 1930s economy) would be taken seriously by later scholars is at best peculiar. An odd set of demeaning assumptions sustained the original argument. Among them that the telegenic pitchman would make short work of the hapless postwar consumer. Yet the TV boom did not occur on schedule. Indeed, long-time owners of RCA stock had to wonder if the boom would *ever* transpire. More importantly, Americans in the late 1940s and 1950s proved to be more careful spenders of their discretionary income than their children—or grandchildren.

Buying that first set was hardly a casual decision for most consumers. "It was like buying a new car," one man recalled a decade later. He spent $420 in the late 1940s or early 1950s. "I'll never forget it, it still eats on me whenever I think of it!"[152] Indeed, those holding back from purchasing sets in the late 1940s most often cited their expense.[153] Although the well-to-do were more likely to own televisions, class became a weaker predictor within a few years. The poor were more likely to put off the transaction; those in the bottom fourth income level were roughly half as likely to own televisions as those in the higher income groups. But the distribution of televisions showed little class bias among those in the other three income levels. As early as 1950, just over one-fourth of all households in the poorest neighborhood in the District of Columbia had televisions, compared to 36.6 percent in Washington's most well-to-do ward.[154]

Family size and age commonly forced the issue. Couples with children were much more likely to own receivers than those without. One 1951 New York study indicated that one-third of one- and two-person households had televisions compared to 61 percent of those families of four or more persons. Those with younger children, under the age of two, were as likely to have televisions as their wealthiest neighbors. The home screen might engage the newborn. "When our little 9-month-old income tax deduction is out of sorts and persists in prolonged lung exercises," wrote one Washington, D.C., parent in 1948, "we don't reach for a baseball bat. We merely turn on [the] television. No matter what's on, out-of-date cowboy films, cartoons, cooking class or the third [race] at Bowie, he gazes in rapture for at least 30 minutes of golden solitude." TV helped to recruit babysitters, or, as proved more likely given their shortage, entertained parents unable to secure them.[155]

In a very short time, television became a common household appliance. As early as 1950, the Levittown suburban development on Long Island began offering model homes that included built-in televisions.[156] Sales were outpacing the construction of new housing. Fred Allen observed, "Today in America there are 3,000,000 families sitting in empty lots with their TV sets." By early 1955, one CBS executive declared, "Television is America's recreation."[157] A year later, individuals polled in New York, Philadelphia, and Charlotte indicated they preferred television to three other mass media, newspapers, radio, and magazines. "Television," wrote Leo Bogart, "has achieved indisputable ascendancy over the other mass media."[158]

4 The Regulators

• • • •

The television industry has been kicked from pillar to post by the government investigators.
CBS president Frank Stanton, December 1956

• • • •

To many in Washington, the FCC has indeed become a subject for humor.
Television Magazine, July 1960

"The networks made a lot of money in their day," Louis Menand wrote in the late twentieth century. "But they looked over their shoulders all the way to the bank, because they never knew when the elaborate system of accommodations on which their fortunes had been built might collapse. Network television was constitutionally neurasthenic: the slightest potential change in its environment induced a precautionary frenzy."[1]

Television, like its older sibling, was a regulated enterprise. Rules regarding programming proprieties that had evolved in radio during the past twenty years had to be obeyed, for they conveyed a larger public culture of control. Nor could any license holder fail to honor promises made to the agency to produce some minority interest programming. The Federal Communications Commission awarded TV frequencies with the understanding that license holders would operate in the public interest. This expectation had never been specific or particularly onerous; the FCC had not proven to be a very stern monitor. Nevertheless, station managers honored the agency's mandate that some programs, some of the time, be intended for viewing minorities.

The networks worried less about the commissioners than others in Washington. There was always the prospect that the Justice Depart-

ment's Antitrust Division would begin inquiring about their practices. Might, for example, the networks' relations with producers violate antitrust law? Such thoughts were not too removed from many network executives. After all, Justice had upset the exhibition structures of the major film companies in the 1940s. And the Antitrust Division did launch an extended inquiry into the networks' production practices in the mid–1950s.

Overseers were to be found on Capitol Hill. In 1952, a House subcommittee held hearings on television's too-revealing costuming and its liquor advertising. Several years later, the Senate Judiciary Committee examined the juvenile delinquency "crisis" and the possible links between television and teen age criminality.[2] Although these proceedings caused some queasiness in New York, none was so disconcerting as investigations into the networks themselves. There had been periodic concerns about the radio networks' size and dominance. These were revived in the mid–1950s by the Senate Commerce and House Judiciary Committees.

The Commission

The FCC itself faced three major challenges in the 1940s and 1950s. The first was the most technical: establish a broadcast standard for television and determine over which portion of the radio frequency the newest medium would operate. The second involved assigning channels to individual communities to provide television service, without interference, to the largest possible audience. Finally, the agency had to award hundreds of licenses. In so doing, the commission would reaffirm its expectation that stations would operate in "the public interest." The commission failed to handle any of these chores in ways that enhanced its reputation. The FCC proved an inconsistent policy maker, as well as an incompetent and, on several occasions, corrupt licensor.

The commission's many shortcomings were not anticipated in the mid–1940s. Under James Lawrence Fly, chairman from 1939 to 1944, the FCC had displayed the regulatory enthusiasm associated with the New Deal. Fly, David Brinkley of NBC News brutally recalled, "was basically antibusiness and quite pompous about it, hating the thought that the big electronic companies might make money out of television." Fly feuded with RCA and forced NBC to sell its second, Blue network.[3] In 1946, the agency had issued its famous Blue Book, an attempt to specify the long-obscure public interest obligations of broadcast licenses. The FCC, in reviewing applications for the renewal of radio licenses, indi-

cated it would more systematically apply its criteria to compel stations to boost their airing of minority interest programming. Broadcasters were furious.[4]

The commission's passion for oversight soon faded. The FCC never pursued its Blue Book policy nor did it promulgate any new initiatives hostile to broadcasters. This is not to say that the agency had become the "captive," as many concluded, of those it regulated. The mere issuance of the Blue Book caused broadcasters to boost their minority interest programming.[5] Station operators still had to complete forms and otherwise live with the prospect, however slight, that the commission could deny the renewal of their licenses or renew them only on a one-year basis. Broadcasters had to obey the "rules" that had evolved in the 1930s. They made token scheduling concessions and devoted small portions of their total schedules to news and religious programming. But nothing more.

The FCC's postwar lethargy had several explanations. A larger political attitude contained the regulator. Free enterprise emerged from the war with an enhanced reputation, and the old New Deal commitment to business oversight fell out of favor. Meanwhile, the FCC found itself overwhelmed with more particular and demanding tasks. It had to formulate a television allocations policy and issue hundreds of TV licenses. And a vigorous enforcement of the Blue Book would by no means have gone uncontested.

Although purportedly an independent agency, the commission was anything but. It was unusually reliant on Congress's goodwill. Congress could and did exercise its control by reducing the FCC's budget. With a relatively small bureaucracy, the agency relied on outside, usually pro-industry, experts in setting key television technology policies. House and Senate committee chairmen held the commission itself accountable for policies, or their absence, during frequent hearings. Asserted one chairman, "The FCC is the instrument of the Commerce Committees of the House and Senate."[6]

If the FCC veered between purposefulness and passivity, so did its congressional monitors. Congress itself was divided over broadcast regulation in the late 1940s and 1950s. A majority of conservative southern and western Democrats sided with their Republican colleagues in opposing, sometimes vociferously, more vigorous regulation. More liberal Democrats almost uniformly championed greater oversight.

The commission was torn between these two congressional sensibilities. The first favored regulation. Although in the minority, proregulatory voices occasionally chaired committees that oversaw the FCC. And even the most probusiness member of Congress might bellow if a certain radio or TV program, or performer's outfit, offended constituents back home. The antiregulatory forces in the 1950s lacked the will and justification for deregulation. It appeared too reactionary a stance. Only after several decades, in the 1970s, did an odd alliance of economists and business leaders offer positive arguments for lessening federal oversight.[7]

Other branches of government could also hinder the FCC. Although the courts during this period generally gave the regulatory agencies broad discretion, the executive branch could and did weaken them. The Budget Bureau limited or reduced budget requests. The bureau refused the commission's request for funding a study of the television networks, and only a special congressional appropriation made one possible in 1955.[8] More fateful was the president's power to fill vacancies on the seven-member FCC. Neither President Truman nor Eisenhower gave commission nominations high priority. Truman's fealty to the New Deal's regulatory traditions proved fitful. Impressive appointments to the commission were often followed by mediocre ones. Eisenhower, the first Republican president in two decades, was under great pressure to name commissioners less hostile to business. Detesting matters of patronage, Eisenhower delegated his appointment authority to aides, who in turn conceded to the Republican National Committee great influence in staffing the agency. One of Eisenhower's least distinguished nominees, George C. McConnaughey, had been recommended by the RNC. "The Commission," a *Nation* contributor concluded in 1957, "has been a resting place for small-time politicos."[9]

That said, it is unlikely that unusually capable individuals would have become commissioners. The prestige and salary were low. "I'm grateful to you for reappointing me," Commissioner Robert T. Bartley wrote Eisenhower late in 1960. "Some days I'm not at all sure you did me a favor."[10] Some of those who did serve with distinction refused reappointment or resigned in favor of practicing law (and representing firms that the commission had regulated).[11]

Not surprisingly, then, the FCC proved unequal to the many tasks that beset it in the late 1940s and 1950s. Most commissioners were

honorable and conscientious individuals. But they tended to be career bureaucrats: determined to be inoffensive, excessively cautious. Some had been congressional staff members or related to an individual member of Congress, such as Speaker Sam Rayburn's nephew.[12] Many came from state regulatory authorities or the FCC's own bureaucracy. A few were engineers, most were attorneys. None had any background in economics, even though broadcasting's dismal science would prove critical to the industry's development.[13] Finally, at least two of Eisenhower's appointees, John C. Doerfer and George C. McConnaughey, were decidedly conservative in matters of regulatory oversight. "My personal views on Government regulation are quite simple," McConnaughey remarked in 1954. "I favor as few controls as possible."[14]

Standards and Frequencies

The commission's first sustained attempt to regulate television came in the early 1940s, when the agency was still determined to exercise its authority, even over the most powerful industry player. RCA, TV's leading proponent in the 1930s, arrogantly if characteristically assumed it could set the standard for television transmission and thus trump its rivals. Here, a technological aside is necessary. Telecasts consisted of the over-the-air transmission of so many lines per receiver. RCA began TV broadcasts in 1939 transmitting 441 lines. Receiving and transmission equipment it manufactured and sold conformed to that standard. But competitors rejected the RCA standard. The FCC, fearful that RCA would dominate the newest medium, declared its right to establish transmission specifications.[15] Extended inquiries continued through the war, all the while further limiting enthusiasm for television itself. The commission's ultimate determination might render obsolete existing televisions. In the end, the FCC had too few resources to conduct its own sustained research and had to rely, in part, on RCA engineers. They in turn colored the commission's judgment. Although RCA agreed to Philco's standard of 525 lines, the compromise carried a modest price; RCA essentially won the battle over transmission standards.[16]

The corporation faced another hurdle during and immediately after the war, establishing which portions of the radio frequency would go to television. The commission had allocated some portions before the war, but only on a temporary basis. Initially, most experts—and the commission—agreed that television should use the very high frequency (VHF) portion of the radio spectrum. The modest number of established

stations were on VHF. And manufacturers of televisions, led by RCA, began producing receivers with VHF tuners for purchase in the summer of 1946.

The best-laid plans would be undone if the commission acted on a petition from CBS. Since April 1944, Columbia had been advocating a color television process that would use another portion of the radio spectrum, ultrahigh frequency (UHF).[17] CBS color was not compatible with the existing black-and-white television standard, including RCA's. If the FCC approved the Columbia system, all television stations would have to move to a new frequency, and all VHF receivers would have to be modified or scrapped.

Although every company involved in television research and manufacture was experimenting with color television, most assumed that the medium would at first only be able to transmit black-and-white images. Then, too, UHF's broadcast quality, compared to that for VHF, was an unknown. UHF had been an offshoot of World War II research. Yet to the astonishment of many within the trade, the FCC agreed to consider the CBS proposal. This threatened to delay, perhaps for years, the diffusion of television, and frustrate, if not bankrupt, those manufacturers and retailers whose warehouses and showrooms were full of sets equipped with VHF receivers. At the same time, much of the planning of TV production—and the sale of advertising to would-be sponsors—had to be put off while the industry awaited the commission's decision.

If nothing else, Columbia's intervention might delay TV's diffusion, perhaps for years. Such an outcome hardly displeased CBS owner William S. Paley. He had limited enthusiasm for television; he much preferred seeing Columbia overtake NBC in radio. Paley's lack of interest was understandable. Unlike RCA, CBS did not manufacture broadcast equipment and receivers. That did not stop the company from modest investments in research on television in the late 1930s and 1940s in the hope that Columbia engineers might develop TV technologies superior to RCA's. Otherwise, CBS faced an unattractive probability. Even if CBS Television bested NBC in the audience ratings, RCA would be earning money through its sale of TV technology. Indeed, if Columbia helped to popularize the new medium through successful programming, it would enrich its main competitor's parent corporation. But CBS, and not RCA, might be the major beneficiary of television's diffusion if Columbia could overturn its larger rival's head start in television. This prospect intrigued Paley. Recalled Peter Goldmark, Columbia's

head of research, "the urge to beat RCA and its ruler, David Sarnoff, was . . . an overriding force at CBS."[18]

Goldmark seemingly handed CBS that chance by developing a color television process. Seeing his first color film, *Gone with the Wind*, in 1940, inspired Goldmark. "I could hardly think of going back to phosphor images of regular black-and-white television," he wrote. "I was obsessed with the thought of applying color to television." Goldmark's obsession positioned CBS to defeat RCA at its own game. Tests of the CBS color telecasts impressed members of the commission and others. Although lacking a manufacturing capacity, CBS struck deals with Zenith and others to produce the CBS color sets.[19] The network also tried to encourage consumers to support "Quality Television," that is, color TV, rather than buy a black-and-white RCA or Du Mont receiver that, in a year or two, might be an expensive plant stand.[20]

Indeed, the failure of TV sales to take off in late 1946 and early 1947 can be attributed in part to the uncertainties that CBS's color initiative had on the industry. Within weeks of the FCC's announcement that it would consider the Columbia proposal, some eighty applications for TV licenses were dropped.[21] The hesitancy of some in Hollywood about entering television may have been partly explained by the CBS petition. One TV manufacturer groused, "If I had sat down and tried to think of some way to screw up this industry, I couldn't have done a better job than CBS has done."[22]

In this regard, the FCC momentarily became Paley's instrument. His lawyers and engineers used the commission to stall Sarnoff's long march until CBS's own research staff had developed a system that might best RCA's. "Columbia is trying to establish itself in television," an NBC executive wrote bitterly, "and at the same time is trying to delay the commercial advent of the immediately available practical television system."[23] Critics who later judged the commission the captive of the "industry" missed a frequent and important dynamic to regulation in postwar America. Individual broadcasters could and did seize on regulatory procedures to gain an advantage over their rivals. CBS, compared to its larger competitor, constantly wooed the commission—and Congress—in the hopes of gaining an advantage over RCA.[24]

The advantage proved short-lived. In March 1947, the FCC denied CBS's motion. Cynics noted that Chairman Charles Denny soon left the commission to become an NBC vice president. But he was only one of the commissioners to support RCA's position. The commission

had found tests of CBS's color system—and of UHF telecasts—too inconclusive to become the industry standard. The FCC's caution, however compromised by Denny's corporate aspirations, may have been the better part of wisdom. The commission correctly expressed concern about the higher cost of color receivers.[25] CBS grossly overestimated the demand for color television (as did RCA a few years later). Buyers proved slow to purchase color receivers once they became available in the mid–1950s. They were expensive purchases for most Americans. As late as 1968, three-fourths of all TV homes only had black-and-white sets.[26]

In the short run, CBS's gamble had cost the network dearly, not only in the largely unrecovered expenses of developing Goldmark's system but also in the charges the network would have to incur to secure VHF licenses. To demonstrate its commitment to color on UHF, CBS had discouraged its radio affiliates from seeking VHF licenses and had itself failed to apply for VHF licenses in larger markets when they were easily obtainable.[27] Network-owned and -operated stations (or O&Os) proved to be the greatest revenue source.[28]

With the boom just under way, the commission faced another dilemma. The FCC's initial allocation of VHF frequencies had serious flaws. Simply put, the commission had incorrectly assigned some signals. Some stations were interfering with the reception of others. In September 1948, the commission ordered a freeze on the allocation of channels. No new licenses would be awarded until the FCC agreed on a master plan of allocations.[29]

The freeze lasted longer—nearly four years—than originally anticipated, but it did not, as some have implied, halt the spread of television altogether. The commission had already issued construction permits to some applicants, who were free to commence operations. Every large American city had at least one TV channel by 1949. The number of stations increased from 51 in January 1949 to 108 four years later, or several months before the freeze was lifted. Although the freeze delayed the awarding of second or third stations in some communities—Pittsburgh only had one continuously operating commercial station from 1948 to 1957—enough big cities had television to encourage many consumers to purchase their first receivers. When the freeze ended, about one-third of all homes had televisions.[30]

Still, the freeze did distort the market. Smaller communities lacked any TV service. In 1950, 21 percent of homes in the twenty-five largest

metropolitan areas, which were the most likely to have one or more TV channels, had televisions, compared to 2 percent of homes in counties with towns of thirty-five thousand people or fewer. More telling was the regional disparity. Just under 25 percent of all homes in the northeastern states had televisions compared to 2 percent in the South and 9 percent in the Pacific states. These disparities only narrowed after the freeze.[31]

The FCC thus unintentionally shaped early television. Network telecasts in the late 1940s and early 1950s had a decidedly New York, big-city flavor. Most network programs were produced in New York. Many of the references on Milton Berle's show, the first great TV hit, left one assuming his entire audience resided in one of the five boroughs or northern New Jersey. In truth, Berle and others appealed to all big-city audiences, not just New Yorkers. Their standing, however, was partly a regulatory subsidy. Viewers in smaller cities and towns were less taken by—and some even hostile toward—performers like Berle. Their New York fixation could be off-putting. "I'm getting tired of localized New York jokes," complained one set owner. "Out in the 'sticks' we don't know or care about the details and they aren't funny to us."[32] This division in the national audience only started to become apparent when, after the freeze, television began penetrating into smaller communities.

Channel Assignments

Left to its own devices, the commission would not have taken four years to promulgate a national allocation of channels. Various competing interests, however, combined to slow the proceedings. CBS revived its color television proposal and had the backing of the chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, Edwin Johnson of Colorado. Johnson's panel oversaw the FCC, and the Colorado Democrat delighted in bullying commissioners when they testified before his committee. Although the commission approved CBS's system in 1950, Columbia's regulatory triumph came too late to upset the old standard. The network had lost the support of manufacturers willing to assemble the color receivers. CBS sought to overcome this disadvantage in 1951 by purchasing a small electronics firm, Hytron, but it proved unequal to the challenge. By 1953, Columbia had given up any hope of prevailing over RCA in television manufacturing.[33]

The greater problem for the commission was the allocation of channels, not whether they telecast in black-and-white. UHF posed a solu-

tion. VHF afforded channels 2 through 13. Because of channel separations, the typical large city would only secure three or four VHF channels. But UHF could provide channels from 14 to 83. This would allow smaller communities to have television service, while creating additional outlets in larger cities.

UHF nevertheless represented a policy risk for the commission. Since 1947 more had been learned about the frequency but tests indicated that it compared poorly to VHF. Simply put, UHF signals did not reach as many homes, nor with the same resolution, as VHF channels.[34] The UHF station operator would therefore operate at a competitive disadvantage. Potential advertisers knew that a VHF channel was likely to be received in more homes. Worse, existing sets could only obtain VHF stations; this, if only temporarily, further limited the UHF station's reach in a given market. If the FCC began assigning licenses on the ultrahigh frequency, it could at best hope that TV manufacturers would sell sets that could obtain UHF channels. And that consumers would purchase them, even though it boosted the cost of a set between 35 and 135 dollars.[35]

A majority of the commissioners elected to gamble on UHF. The higher frequency stations competing with VHF channels would be disadvantaged. But VHF's greater geographical reach, they reasoned, served the public interest because the lower channels would reach homes in more remote areas. At the same time, introducing UHF would allow the FCC to honor one policy objective: UHF stations would increase the number of potential broadcast voices in a community. Moreover, the commission could award many more licenses to nonprofit educational stations, which had begun to lobby for TV assignments.[36]

Throughout most of the 1950s virtually no one spoke of a state-sponsored cultural alternative along the lines of the British Broadcasting Corporation. Those dissatisfied with the American system of broadcasting had few options. Some championed pay television systems, some of which promised higher cultural fare than the networks offered. Subscription TV, a St. Louis woman wrote in 1955, "would enable all of us to have the chance [of] seeing the first-run movies, Broadway Hits and even educational programs that many would like to see and hear."[37]

Others considered educational broadcasting their last best hope. Although commercial radio and television stations had aired programs produced by public schools and universities, advocates of educational

television (ETV) sought more. They wanted their own system. And the FCC's Sixth Report and Order reserved 242 frequencies, or 12 percent of the television spectrum, for educational broadcasters. Commissioner Frieda Hennock has long been credited for the educational reservations. But Hennock's role may have been overstated. She was not a coalition builder, and the reservations required three other commissioners' votes. Hennock did persuade President Truman to share with her colleagues his support for the reservations. At the same time, educational television had bipartisan congressional support; its earliest Senate advocates included Senator John W. Bricker of Ohio, a conservative Republican, and his liberal Democratic colleague from Connecticut, William Benton. ETV advocates likely deserve the most credit for making a substantial case for educational television during commission proceedings. That argument included a critique of commercial television, which fed into the misgivings that some commissioners—not just Hennock—shared.[38] The FCC, the supposed industry captive, initially turned down petitions to make unused educational reservations available to commercial operations. In the Sixth Report and Order, the FCC had even rejected the request of CBS, anxious to secure stations in Chicago and Boston, to delete noncommercial VHF reservations in Chicago and Durham, New Hampshire, and move the latter channel to Boston.[39]

Nevertheless, ETV proponents hardly justified the commission's resolve. Educational broadcasting had existed from the beginning of radio, most often at land-grant universities in the Midwest. Based in the heartland, they had few if any connections to the nation's cultural elite in New York. Many educational broadcasters hailed from speech departments or education schools, rarely high on the academy's hierarchy, which marginalized many on their own campuses. So did the resistance of some colleagues to engage in any radio listening. As a sociologist at Columbia University derisively concluded, "By and large, the educators who concerned themselves with radio were the teachers of the teachers of secondary education. Few (comparatively) men and women of national intellectual stature gave a damn about policies for radio. They didn't listen to it."[40]

Gilbert Seldes, perhaps the nation's foremost commentator on popular culture, had his own doubts about ETV. While seeing merit in setting aside some channels for noncommercial interests, Seldes feared that educational TV would relieve the commercial networks of the pressure to produce cultural and informational programming. By cre-

ating separate educational channels, he wrote in 1951, "the foundation of a true democratic broadcasting system is undermined. The commercial broadcasters will be under no obligation to vary their programs to create appetites of many kinds, to interest people of several levels. They will be quite justified in saying, 'Art? Art's on channel X.'" Moreover, educational interests would be hard put to match the viewers' expectations for production values. A truly "democratic culture," Seldes averred, mixed high and mass culture; it would offer Milton Berle and Harvard president James Conant. To Seldes, "the two kinds of programs should cross-fertilize each other, and they cannot do this if they are kept separate."[41]

As Seldes forecast, ETV's programming philosophy further limited its lure. Educational broadcasters defined their mission as essentially *educational*, whether for children or, more often, adults. Moreover, ETV should be run by educators. "If educational television is to be first-rate education," a St. Louis ETV leader remarked, "it should be controlled by the educators. Ultimate responsibility for the control of the programs should be in the hands of men whose business is, not to sell us things, but to educate us."[42] They spoke of telecasting lectures so that "viewdents," including some who were incarcerated, might receive high school or college credit. Much of the daytime schedule went to classroom instruction. Evening programming was less consciously instructional, though children's shows emphasized teaching over entertaining. Even a sympathetic Jack Gould of the *New York Times* regarded ETV as "an alternative and complementary service." "Watching [Boston's] WGBH-TV makes clear that an educational station is not competitive with commercial stations; a viewer certainly would not want to do without the straight network theatrical attractions."[43]

Commercial broadcasters regarded ETV with an understandable skepticism. "Most broadcasters doubt the ability of educators to build and hold audiences because most educators are trained only to teach . . . captive audiences," commented Justin Miller of the National Association of Broadcasters, the industry's trade group. "Most broadcasters believe that educational television operations, if and when licensed and operating, will fail—just as did most educational radio stations—to build and hold audiences sufficient to justify the continuance of such educational stations."[44]

Miller was both right and wrong. Only one ETV station, Los Angeles's KTHE, left the air, whereas others struggled to survive and capture

viewers. Two-thirds of those surveyed in the spring of 1956 indicated they *never* watched WGBH in Boston. "Only rarely," two scholars later concluded, "has an educational station been able to demonstrate that as much as one percent of sets in its area have been tuned to it at any given time."[45] Educational television had come to the party late and poorly dressed.

Moreover, most ETV proponents grossly understated both the costs of operating television stations and the support they could engender. Hennock herself disputed the "inflated and unrealistic estimates of the amounts necessary to build and operate" an ETV station.[46] She was among the many clueless. Immediately after the Sixth Report and Order, ETV advocates gathered at Pennsylvania State College to plot their future. Some hoped to secure the necessary funding from private foundations, despite a warning from a representative of the Carnegie Corporation that such speculation constituted "wishful thinking." WGBH's 1956 budget of $300,000, Jack Gould reported, equaled the cost of *one* NBC spectacular.[47]

ETV advocates were not helped by the widely shared view that commercial television could provide cultural programming. Revealingly, when the Ford Foundation, the nation's largest, "entered" television in 1953, it did so by sponsoring a cultural program, *Omnibus*, on CBS. Although the foundation did, indeed, begin to support some ETV stations and productions, its decision to sponsor *Omnibus* on a commercial network was telling. Most proponents of culturally ambitious programming did not look to ETV but to commercial television.[48] Indeed, even many educators assumed that commercial TV would make room for them. Kansas City did not need a station reserved for educational use, the president of the University of Kansas City, Clarence R. Decker, wrote in April 1951. "With an adequate number of commercial TV stations in Kansas City," Decker concluded, "I am satisfied from our past and present experience with radio broadcasters in Kansas City that they will make available to educational institutions in Kansas City time for television broadcasts and without cost to us."[49] Several universities, for example, Notre Dame and Missouri, operated *commercial* stations, as did Iowa State.[50]

Not surprisingly, then, ETV failed to take hold in much of the country. In 1956, angry regulators reassigned a central West Virginia VHF channel from educational to commercial after ETV proponents failed to commence operations. The area had no television service.[51]

Three years later, twenty-two states lacked ETV stations. In 1961, only one ETV station operated between Boston and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and Philadelphia's WHYY aired on an ultrahigh frequency that few in the Quaker City could pick up. ETV had yet to start stations in two of the nation's three largest markets, New York and Los Angeles.[52]

The Best Mislaid Plans

For all broadcasters, commercial and educational, the Sixth Report and Order's effectiveness came to be based largely on hope, as opposed to radio physics and price. Announced in April 1952, the new plan awarded frequencies for the entire nation. In many markets, one or two VHF assignments would be complemented by one or two UHF channels. The commission chose to ignore UHF's competitive disadvantages and assume that in time they would disappear.[53] They did not, certainly not in the short run. In November 1953, WTVI, near St. Louis, had an audience share of 0.4 percent, "so low that for all practical purposes this station does not exist," smirked a rival station manager.[54] Although set manufacturers began offering UHF converters, most consumers refused to pay the additional thirty-five dollars. Several UHF operators claimed retailers discouraged consumers from purchasing converters and lacked technicians to service them.[55] "The key to the obstacles concerning UHF broadcasters is the fact that the public continues to buy nearly 600,000 receivers every month which are equipped only for VHF reception," Commissioner Hennock observed in May 1955.[56] A despondent Indiana UHF general manager wrote, "I seriously question whether any UHF station in the country is facing the future without considerable doubt."[57]

The FCC's reliance on UHF turned into a policy disaster. The percentage of televisions able to receive UHF channels actually fell, from 9.2 to 7.0 percent, between 1957 and 1960.[58] Between 1954 and 1961, the number of UHF stations dropped from 121 to 76. Pittsburgh, with one commercial VHF channel operating between 1948 and 1957, had a commercial UHF channel commence operations in September 1953. It went dark nine months later.[59] ETV, with about two-thirds of its assignments on UHF, suffered even more. Ohio State University's channel 34 went on the air in 1956. Four years later, about 15 percent of the televisions in the Columbus area had UHF receivers.[60] Frank Stanton of CBS came to admit that Columbia's faith in UHF had been misplaced.[61]

One early television entrant, Du Mont, had anticipated the weakness of the FCC's UHF policies. The commission's 1952 table of assignments not only ill served ETV interests but handicapped the already struggling ABC and Du Mont networks. Du Mont had fought hard for an alternative plan. UHF signals could not compete with VHF channels, Du Mont executives and engineers explained. A truly competitive market would have to be all-VHF or all-UHF. To provide for more network competition, Du Mont recommended assigning more VHF channels to the larger metropolitan areas; fewer VHF channels would be reserved for educational institutions. Under the Du Mont Plan, fifty-four of the top one hundred markets would have had four or more commercial VHF channels compared to seven under the commission's plan. Du Mont understood that its long-term viability depended on having a roughly equivalent number of affiliates as NBC and CBS. And these affiliates had to have signals of comparable reach. That is, a Du Mont UHF affiliate would be at a serious disadvantage if its local CBS and NBC competitors were on VHF. The Du Mont station would have fewer "TV homes" and therefore be of far less interest to national (and local) advertisers. Du Mont urged the commission to allocate more markets with four commercial VHF- or UHF-only channels, thus giving it (and ABC) a more level playing field. The FCC's plan, one Du Mont spokesman concluded, "is actually conducive to a two-network system."[62]

A majority of the commission rejected the Du Mont Plan. Du Mont's greater number of all-UHF markets would have created more potential "white areas," that is, sections that would have lacked TV service altogether. As the chief of the commission's Broadcast Bureau wrote in July 1954, "Continued service to scattered small communities and rural areas in many parts of the country depends on an efficient use of VHF channels."[63] Residents in these lightly populated areas complained loudly to their elected representatives. And the commission did not want to deny a farmer *any* television service so that her big-city cousins might have four channels, instead of two, from which to chose their evening video fare. Commissioner John C. Doerfer warned in 1956 against "any action which would disenfranchise thousands of people now receiving service in the fringe area of a present VHF operation."[64] Making the Dallas–Ft. Worth market all-UHF, a Dallas station owner claimed, would cost 590,000 rural homes TV service.[65] A North Carolina broadcaster decried "depriving large segments of our population of any service, just so the service we have can have more competition."[66]

At the same time, the commission majority appears to have misunderstood the television boom. TV did prove immensely popular. But the commissioners defending the Sixth Report and Order assumed that this popularity would foster the creation of many more TV stations than advertisers could (or would), in fact, support.[67] Du Mont himself had predicted that America would have 1,000 stations by 1960.[68] There were about half that many, 515, in January 1960. Although advertiser demand for television time did increase steadily through the 1950s—total television advertising sales rose from $90.6 million in 1950 to $1.15 billion a decade later—advertisers would only support some, not all, stations.[69] Advertisers, after all, promoted products. They would not subsidize a marginal network or station if more popular outlets promised many more potential buyers. "National and regional advertising is virtually non-existent for UHF stations," the owner of channel 64 in Battle Creek, Michigan, complained in June 1954, "when distant VHF stations claim coverage of the area."[70] A Montgomery, Alabama, UHF station, WCOV, reported losing 70 percent of its national advertising spot business when a VHF channel commenced operations in December 1954. WCOV's general manager later concluded, "We will never be on a truly competitive basis with our VHF competition."[71]

Within a few years of the Sixth Report's release, it had become clear that not enough VHF channels had been awarded in enough markets to give a third network, let alone a fourth, a fair chance. "There is the imminent possibility," a *Nation* contributor observed early in 1955, "that television will henceforth be controlled by the two major networks."[72] Indeed, Du Mont went dark later that year. By then, however, ABC, having merged with the film exhibitor United Paramount, began to enjoy some programming success. Not enough, as it happened, to overcome the absence of a third VHF outlet in some medium-size markets. Advertisers, anxious to maximize their audiences, continued to favor CBS and NBC, which had stronger chains of affiliates. And a strong chain of affiliates took on added significance because under FCC rules, no network could own more than five stations.[73]

How did CBS and NBC acquire such desirable affiliates? The Big Two both had enormous advantages over their rivals. As the dominant radio networks, they had established ties, some more than two decades old, to radio stations across the country. The networks carefully nurtured these connections. Station ownership tended to be stable and owners rarely changed their affiliation. Radio affiliates were among the

first to seek television licenses in their communities and they not unreasonably expected to continue their association in television. A Charlotte broadcaster wrote in 1956 that his radio station had "been engaged in a mutually satisfactory radio network relationship with CBS for almost three decades. It was logical that WBTV would enter into and consummate negotiations with CBS-TV toward a basic affiliation agreement with the latter."[74]

This advantage was greatly strengthened by the significantly heavier initial expenditures both NBC and CBS made in network television programming. Frank Stanton told a Senate committee in 1954 that Du Mont might have overcome its allocations problem had that network not been so tightfisted about programming costs. Columbia, unlike Du Mont, had invested heavily in programming to make its network attractive to potential affiliates. The five hundred thousand dollars Du Mont spent publicizing his allocations plan might have been better spent on developing popular series like *Captain Video*.[75] The money CBS—and NBC—devoted to series gave them immensely greater leverage brokering affiliation agreements. Stations commencing operations *wanted* to affiliate with NBC or CBS.

The Big Two ruthlessly spurned suitors running UHF stations. Channel 53 in Fresno, California, ceased operations after CBS refused to make it an affiliate. CBS waited until a VHF station went on the air before signing an agreement in Fresno.[76] Columbia did not have much choice. National advertisers cared about the number of homes a network reached. A VHF channel had greater coverage. As a result, national advertisers were far more likely to sponsor programs on NBC and CBS. Indeed, although ABC's competitive position improved over the years, not until the late 1970s was the network able to overcome the structural disadvantages created by the Sixth Report and Order.[77]

Nevertheless, the FCC cannot be given too much blame for fostering television's duopoly. The commission did weigh making television all-UHF, though that frequency's inability to reach certain areas unnerved some at the agency.[78] The FCC similarly considered requesting that all-channel televisions receive a tax break or be mandated by federal statute; the Eisenhower administration rejected both proposals.[79] The commission could not regulate affiliation agreements, however, except to limit them, as it then did, to one per viewing area. Du Mont correctly recognized that only a more equitable distribution of channels would have allowed any undermining of the CBS-NBC dominance of

early television. But Du Mont, and ABC initially, ran their networks on the cheap; they had relatively few popular programs. To more market-oriented regulators like John C. Doerfer, this failure to invest in programming, and not the technical disadvantages of UHF, was the problem. "If the programming is attractive," he declared, "people will spend money to convert their sets [to obtain UHF signals]."[80]

Then, too, as Doerfer and others repeatedly noted, fostering network competition was not the commission's primary responsibility. The Sixth Report and Order's first objective was "to provide at least one television service to all parts of the United States," not necessarily multiple television services. The commission's second priority was to provide each community, depending on its size and distance from larger population centers, with at least one television station. (The FCC ranked third creating stations in individual communities.)[81] The Communications Act, Doerfer explained, "provides that the distribution of frequencies among the several states and communities shall be upon a fair, efficient and equitable basis. It makes no provision for a 'nation-wide competitive system.'" Enhancing competition would be in the public interest, he granted, but not when "this is to be accomplished at the expense of denying a first television service to substantial numbers of people[;] it is tantamount to displacing the Congressional mandate of an efficient and equitable distribution and substituting therefor equal competitive facilities for a few applicants."[82] "If there is any cardinal principle underlying the Commission's final decision," insisted Commissioner George E. Sterling, "it is that the interests of the smaller communities and rural areas of our Country had to be afforded adequate recognition."[83]

This did not mean the commission was hostage to rural America. The agency's preferences were in keeping with the nation's traditional policies toward communication. U.S. postal law had long favored the smaller towns and villages. American Telephone and Telegraph preserved its own huge share of the telephone market by self-consciously committing itself to the principle of universal service. (And the post office and AT&T were to varying degrees monopolies.) The Federal Radio Commission's allocation of higher-powered "clear channel" stations could be likened to the FCC's VHF policy. Clear-channel stations had enormous advantages, and left the playing field uneven, yet they afforded more isolated households radio service.[84]

Then, too, duopoly was not necessarily the worst fate for American television in the 1950s. This may be a hard argument to make to later

generations, conditioned to multiple cable or satellite dish channels, and uneasy if not hostile to the idea of a concentration of voices by a few corporations. Yet broadcasters in the 1950s tended to be a self-conscious lot. They did not take their place in American society for granted. Their programming decisions normally reflected this unease.

On the other hand, ABC eventually felt free to misbehave. The unequal distribution of channels encouraged ABC to approach network television differently. It had to be more ruthless about what it aired (Westerns and detective series) while forsaking the cultural and informational programming that Columbia and NBC occasionally telecast. As ABC began to gain viewers in the late 1950s, CBS and NBC responded by mimicry. This outcome might not have occurred so quickly had the commission adopted the Du Mont Plan.

Issuing Licenses

After the release of the Sixth Report and Order, the commission spent most of the rest of the decade issuing individual licenses. No other single responsibility proved so time consuming or so cumbersome. As the value of a (VHF) TV station became apparent, the number of parties applying for licenses rose sharply. New procedures imposed on the commission by Congress further bogged down the commission, delaying certain decisions. Some communities waited for years to receive second or third stations. As late as 1958, just over one-third of all homes received only one TV channel.[85] The simplest procedure—to sell licenses to the highest bidder—would have enormously eased the lives of regulators and applicants. Public auctions of licenses between 1953 and 1960, one scholar estimated, would have released between one-fourth and one-third of the commission's personnel assigned to those proceedings. However, auctioning licenses was only beginning to find adherents. More often, the political and bureaucratic leaders almost mindlessly opposed something so efficient and market-driven. When a Boston architect proposed this solution to Senator John F. Kennedy early in 1958, the senator replied in language only an aide could write and only a bureaucrat could comprehend. The Communications Act, he wrote, had been intended "to diversify opportunities in program facilities."[86]

As was becoming its custom, the FCC made the worst of a bad situation. The commission promulgated criteria intended to govern its decisions, which it then routinely overlooked. This inconsistency in

turn raised suspicions among the rejected and eventually among a few journalists and regulatory law experts. Politics appeared to shape some outcomes. With a Republican majority on the commission during the Eisenhower presidency, prominent Democratic newspapers failed to secure licenses while Republican papers enjoyed far better treatment.[87] The largesse of some applicants affected some votes, either directly or indirectly. The FCC, one commissioner recalled, assumed the moral character of a race track.[88]

The competing interests were not, by and large, large corporations, anxious to create media conglomerates. That described the telecommunications industry several decades later. In the 1950s, commission rules limiting ownership to five stations discouraged would-be empire builders. That said, some large corporations, notably Westinghouse and later Time Inc., did secure TV licenses. Yet they were secondary aspects of their operations, almost afterthoughts. Indeed, Time Inc. eventually sold its television stations.[89]

This is not to say that larger corporate interests did not court the commissioners. But they were the usual suspects, specifically CBS and NBC. CBS was the more determined; it made the most elaborate presentations during proceedings, and sometimes after them. When Commissioner Doerfer and his wife visited New York, CBS president Frank Stanton entertained them. NBC never matched such initiatives, though it permitted Doerfer to use a duck blind it rented in Maryland.[90] And RCA did lend color televisions, then expensive commodities, to each commissioner. "It's no luxury," Doerfer explained. "It's part of our job to know how it works. We look at television shows not for fun, but to learn what's going on."[91]

By and large, however, those engaged in the heaviest lobbying of the commission fell into two groups. The first were individual parties seeking to enter television in a given market. The second were companies seeking to create or add to their "group" of stations. Wooing the commissioners might occur at the FCC's dismal quarters in the New Post Office building on Pennsylvania Avenue. Petitioners treated individual commissioners to lunch and, in at least one instance, free turkeys. During a broadcast trade association meeting, the opportunities for entreaties were greater and harder to monitor. Courtiers paid for rounds of golf at prestigious courses. Regulators drawing modest salaries found such temptations hard to resist. After all, Doerfer reasoned, "You can't golf alone."[92]

The most notorious example of influence peddling involved the commission's 1957 vote to assign Miami's channel 10 to National Airlines. The FCC's hearing examiner had recommended the application of A. Frank Katzentine. He possessed an established if not unblemished record in radio. National Airlines, in contrast, had no background in broadcasting; in fact, no airline had previously obtained a broadcast license. But Katzentine was a prominent Democrat. And National had been a heavy contributor to the Republican party.[93] The airline's executives also proved superior regulatory tacticians. The decisive vote came from Richard Mack, a well-connected if unprepossessing Florida Democrat who had replaced the industry nuisance Frieda Hennock in 1955. National had hired Thurman Whiteside, a Miami attorney, to lobby Mack. The two men had been friends since college. And Mack was very much in Whiteside's debt. The attorney had lent Mack just under fifteen thousand dollars and then forgiven the loans. The commissioner subsequently supported the National application. Soon after Mack's financial relationship to Whiteside was revealed during House Commerce Committee hearings in early 1958, the commissioner resigned. "Richard Mack," Walter Goodman later wrote, "allowed himself to be placed in a position where it was impossible to maintain a semblance of official integrity."[94]

Much as some focused on their misdeeds, Mack and other ethically challenged commissioners did not account for the FCC's many failings in the 1950s. Seven of the nation's wisest women and men, none of whom played golf or enjoyed expensive meals, would have been hard-pressed to make the agency very effective. The commission was inherently weak, subject to the interventions of Congress and the White House. To assure a favorable decision, lobbyists hardly limited themselves to the FCC, but approached members of Congress and even the executive branch. Although White House intervention actually declined under Presidents Truman and Eisenhower, most members of Congress continued to feel free to volunteer their views on agency proceedings. "We in Congress regard the Commission as an extension of ourselves; we regard it as the arm of Congress," Senator Edwin C. Johnson remarked in 1950. "We in Congress feel that not only are we competent to evaluate its actions, but that we have the constitutional duty of exercising a close supervisory interest in them."[95]

Congressional interference tended to fall into the category of constituent service, if not self-interest. A small number of congressmen, in-

cluding, briefly, Chairman Oren Harris of the House Commerce Committee, held interests in broadcast properties.[96] But such conflicts of interest hardly explained the behavior of most members of Congress. A call or letter to the chairman of the FCC could seemingly be compared to routine communications to the head of the Veterans Bureau, which had failed to send a benefits check to a World War I veteran. There was an important distinction, however. The Great War veteran was a mere voter. The individual seeking a TV license was much more; he was likely to be a well-to-do local business leader who could be counted on for contributions when the member of Congress sought reelection. Moreover, his donations likely could be multiplied in that he probably had influence among other business people back home.[97] The goodwill of the petitioner was all the more important if he owned a local newspaper or radio station (newspaper publishers and radio station owners were among the earliest applicants for TV licenses). No politician wanted to slight an editor or station manager, unless, as was the case in a few proceedings, the editor was a political adversary. And a broadcaster could repay the debt, as many did, by airing special video reports to constituents featuring the congressman.[98]

Both Republicans and Democrats engaged in this wire-pulling. Senator Stuart Symington, Democrat of Missouri, had been secretary of the air force under fellow Missourian Harry Truman, whose Senate seat he returned to the Democrats in 1952. Symington knew the rules. Old friends and financial contributors to his 1952 campaign needed his help. Their UHF station was losing hundreds of thousands of dollars. Would Symington ask the commissioners, including Richard Mack, to support changing the channel assignment to a VHF? Symington agreed. "I am cognizant of all of your efforts in our behalf," one of the owners wrote Symington, "and have so much proof of what you are doing for us that I cannot express to you in a few words how deeply I appreciate all these efforts."[99] Symington denied any impropriety, telling the *St. Louis Post–Dispatch* of his intervention, "This I would do for any constituent—that's what I'm here for."[100]

In the Channel 10 case, Whiteside had a special relationship with Mack that all but guaranteed National Airlines the commissioner's vote. Yet as several contemporary observers noted, Katzentine, the other applicant, had also lobbied Mack. And when he learned he might not secure the license, he unleashed congressional allies, including Senator Estes Kefauver of Tennessee, whom Katzentine had supported for the

Democratic presidential nomination, in an effort to reverse the commission's vote. The House Commerce Committee only pursued the Channel 10 case after a bitter Katzentine alerted the committee counsel, Bernard Schwartz, to the Mack-Whiteside connection. "To label regulatory commissions 'independent' under these conditions requires political blinders," wrote one student of the Channel 10 case, "for the agencies are in fact the most broadly 'dependent' of our government structures."[101]

As Kefauver's involvement indicated, members of Congress could and did intervene on behalf of nonconstituents. When the popular singer Gene Autry applied for a radio station in Tucson, he wrote then-representative Lyndon Johnson of Texas. Knowing Johnson was a friend of then FCC chairman Paul Porter, Autry asked the young congressman "to put in a plug for our application." "There is not much I can do on the matter you mentioned," Johnson replied, "but you can count on me putting in a good word for you."[102]

The clearest demonstration of Congress's domination of the commission came in March 1958, as the FCC considered permitting tests of pay, or subscription, television systems. Long championed by some in the industry, notably E. F. McDonald of Zenith, pay TV charged users a fee for individual telecasts of cultural or sporting events. (Baseball's Brooklyn Dodgers had been among its more public advocates.) When the commission indicated it would support tests of pay systems in select markets, local broadcasters, along with NBC and CBS, orchestrated a mass revolt. Pay television, the opponents cried, would eventually destroy "free TV" by luring away more attractive programming to subscription systems. "We believe that we can't exist as an industry half free and half fee," CBS president Frank Stanton remarked.[103] On the eve of pay TV hearings, CBS affiliates hosted a dinner in Washington, with top network performers providing the entertainment. The guest list included members of Congress. "My God," remarked a Washington attorney, "there were more Congressmen present than for the State of the Union Message."[104] Individual stations urged their viewers to protest. And thousands did, particularly the elderly on fixed incomes. "Please will you help to keep Free Television in this country," one couple wrote on lined paper. "There are lots of us old folks living on pensons [*sic*] that would have to part with our televison [*sic*] sets if we were compled [*sic*] to pay to use them."[105] Although individual voters rarely wrote their congressmen in the 1950s regarding television, many did

in 1958. They feared pay TV—and admonished their representatives to forestall it. "Any significant experimentation in pay-TV," remarked one House member, "will have disastrous consequences for the viewing public." Under pressure from the House Commerce Committee, the FCC relented and put off allowing any tests for another four years.[106] "Congress has virtually taken over the F.C.C. for the time being," Jack Gould of the *New York Times* wrote. "The current commission unquestionably has been the weakest and most ineffectual in a long time; it has procrastinated interminably and allowed itself to be pushed from pillar to post. Congressmen must share in the blame because they have compromised the agency's independence by intervening in behalf of constituents."[107]

Monitoring the Bullies

Congress's neutering of the FCC did not, as might be surmised, give all broadcasters free rein in the 1950s. In fact, members of the House and Senate played favorites. Individual license holders, especially if political supporters, could count on their representatives' devotion. Others were not so fortunate.

Contrast the local station owner's leverage to that of the two major networks, CBS and NBC. Both networks sought to win Congress's favor. But Congress did not regard the Big Two nearly so highly as it did individual station operators, who were likely to be influential constituents. With the networks' control over programming apparent from the beginning, different House and Senate committees sought to determine if that dominance was fairly earned. In 1954, a Senate Commerce subcommittee held extensive hearings on the woes of UHF television. Both CBS and NBC promised to do more for UHF stations. Harder to reconcile were congressional suspicions that the Big Two violated antitrust law in their dealings with affiliates and producers. Among the disaffected was Senator John W. Bricker, a conservative Republican and normally no foe of large-scale capitalism. But CBS's coverage of his proposed constitutional amendment limiting the president's treaty-making power deeply angered him (and anticipated the Republican Right's antagonism toward the national news media). Bricker, as chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee in 1953 and 1954, sought retribution, sponsoring a major investigation into the networks' monopolistic tendencies.[108]

Bricker and others pressed the FCC to launch a three-year study of network practices in 1955. Under the leadership of Dean Roscoe L.

Barrow of the University of Cincinnati Law School, the FCC's Office of Network Study interviewed network executives as well as producers and advertisers. The Barrow inquiry was the source of no little anxiety at NBC and even more so at CBS. Issuing its report in late 1957, Barrow's group concluded that "the networks' concentration of control and practices in which they engage have been found incompatible with the public interest." It recommended numerous new restrictions on the networks' practices, mainly affecting the Big Two.[109]

While Barrow's group labored in relative anonymity, the House Judiciary and Senate Commerce Committees held prolonged hearings on network television in 1956. The committee chairmen, Representative Emanuel Celler of New York and Senator Warren Magnuson of Washington, were liberal Democrats suspicious of corporate control of the newest medium. Congress and the commission had "to insure that private monopoly does not occur where Government monopoly is avoided," Magnuson argued in 1955. A year later, he declared that "broadcasting stations should not be simply house-organs grinding out the tune of big business interests which own them."[110] Did the networks have too much power over the programming of affiliates and the program producers themselves? In a September 1957 address, Celler knew the answer. He decried "the network practices that deny [the] regional United States its own expression. . . . [and] the stranglehold of major networks upon prime television hours."[111]

The pressures were unrelenting. The congressional proceedings required extensive documentation and testimony from senior network executives and individual stations. Although the House and Senate hearings concluded in 1956, congressional leaders encouraged the Department of Justice's Antitrust Division to accelerate its review of the networks.[112] Stanton for one was disheartened. "This has been a very discouraging year," he wrote a friend on Christmas Eve, 1956. "The television industry has been kicked from pillar to post by the government investigators."[113] Several months later, NBC president Robert W. Sarnoff remarked that "the networks have been investigated from Dan to Beersheba, and still the investigations and studies continue."[114]

In the fall of 1959, the House Commerce Committee investigated charges that the popular network quiz shows had been fixed. The House Commerce Committee chairman, Oren Harris, was considerably more partial to broadcasters than Celler and Magnuson. Nonetheless, even

Harris could not spare CBS and NBC the embarrassment of having their programs' misdeeds exposed during the widely covered proceedings.

Although Harris's performance could be dismissed as a "symbolic" confrontation, meant to placate opinion leaders but not effect real change, leaders like Celler and Magnuson were sincere in their disapprobation. They and others disdained the duopoly that the FCC had sanctioned. "The networks exert a tremendous influence in molding the tastes and views of the American people," a 1955 Senate Commerce Committee aide contended. "The public would be better protected if there were many networks performing this function rather than a handful."[115] There was much to be said for this critique. Yet "reform" carried a risk. The more competitive system reformers championed might not serve the public interest as well as the two-network rivalry of the mid–1950s. Stanton and others did not receive enough credit for what they occasionally were achieving on television. An unappreciative Celler, for one, saluted the beginnings of ABC's challenge to CBS and NBC. "I personally am very happy to see ABC in this picture and I hope that ABC can go from strength to strength," he remarked in 1956. Celler should have been more careful what he wished for.[116]

5 "Mr. Spectacular"

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These are great days. They are trying, difficult, dangerous. But they are great days. We are close to a tremendous development that can bring forth the good society our western thinkers have hoped for—free, strong, peaceful, abundant.
Sylvester L. Weaver Jr., 1953

• • • •

The trade has hardly been dull with Mr. Spectacular around.
Robert Lewis Shayon, 1956

Baby boomers of a certain age and with good video memories will remember NBC's production of *Peter Pan.* First telecast in March 1955, *Peter Pan* was a musical adaptation of a children's play by James M. Barrie. The story was familiar to many younger viewers; Disney had done a popular animated version several years earlier. Mary Martin played Peter, the boy from Neverland. Viewed today, the production, like so much else offered by television in the 1950s, has its awkward aspects. The harnesses that allow Peter and the other children to "fly" across the set can clearly be seen. Peter's fairy friend, Tinker Bell, is rather obviously a flashlight. Yet these flaws, like so many others, were forgiven by literally millions of American children and their parents. Recalled one NBC producer, "The audience adored it."[1]

Peter Pan represented a conscious strategy by NBC to reinvent broadcasting. The network's chief programmer believed that television should not follow radio's rules and rely on weekly and daily series. More viewers would be captured if NBC emphasized special productions like *Peter Pan.* Six years earlier, NBC had seen no need to upset industry practice. The FCC had in effect accepted RCA's standards for television transmission and emphasis on the very high frequency. RCA domi-

nated the initial market for receivers. And NBC had most of the newest medium's hits, including *Howdy Doody* and *The Texaco Star Theater*. It had the largest number of affiliates. All in all, NBC appeared unusually well positioned to benefit from the long-awaited television boom.

Nevertheless, it was by no means clear that NBC would be able to capitalize on its advantages. The success of Howdy Doody and Uncle Miltie had been accidental. A successful television network would require many more hours of programming and an overriding programming philosophy. NBC's record in radio cast severe doubts on its ability to meet the challenge of TV. NBC's longtime ratings leadership in radio had less to do with show business wizardry than with its strong chain of affiliates, which national advertisers prized. The network had a stable of popular programs. But they had been fashioned by advertising agents, not NBC executives. They labored grimly in a company culture that favored the electronics research and manufacturing divisions of RCA. It was a rigid, overbureaucratized environment. NBC, *Business Week* observed, "has long been known as an extraordinarily top-heavy organization, with a vice-president for every turn in the concourse beneath [network headquarters in] Rockefeller Center."[2] Innovation might be rewarded—modestly—at RCA's laboratories. It was stifled in the network's headquarters at Radio City. Nor was too much money to be spent, unless it involved a prestigious enterprise like securing the services of Arturo Toscanini to conduct the NBC Symphony. And that expenditure could be justified because of the synergies achieved through the sale of RCA Victor recordings of the symphony's performances.

NBC Radio's vulnerabilities only became apparent in the late 1940s when CBS overtook it in the ratings. CBS was very much NBC's opposite. Columbia's main business was broadcasting, not electronics. Show business mattered; it was not an afterthought. Unlike David Sarnoff, who delegated programming decisions to underlings, CBS owner William Paley personally directed Columbia radio in the late 1940s. He encouraged the start of new series, several of which proved popular. The crowning blow came when Paley signed major NBC talent, led by the immensely popular comedian Jack Benny, to Columbia contracts. "Paley's raids" left NBC in second place for the first time in radio history. By 1949, sixteen of the twenty most popular network radio programs were on CBS. NBC faced many challenges, network president Niles Trammell admitted in September 1949, not the least of which was "Mr. Paley's desire to bring a little carefree laughter into the homes of Columbia listeners."[3]

NBC Television had been dealt a terrible setback. Although Paley had not secured so much talent with television in mind, few around him doubted that performers like Benny would eventually do TV programs. The raid greatly depleted NBC's potential television talent pool. And it called into question NBC's very competence at a time when the network sought to mount and promote a television network to potential affiliated stations and advertisers. Nor could RCA's managers overlook NBC's woes. The broadcasting division accounted for roughly a fifth of the parent corporation's revenues. And the success of NBC Television was inexorably linked to the sales of RCA's televisions.[4]

Into the breach stepped Sylvester L. "Pat" Weaver Jr., who became head of NBC Television in August 1949. Although just forty years old, Weaver, from a well-to-do L.A. family, had an impressive résumé. He was a graduate of Dartmouth and aspired to be an author; his mother had been a musician and writer.[5] He ended up writing for a Los Angeles radio station; he eventually served as a program producer and announcer in his hometown, then in New York. In 1937, Young and Rubicam, one of the nation's larger advertising agencies, hired him to produce Fred Allen's popular radio program. Weaver went on to work for one of radio's biggest clients, the American Tobacco Company. Having returned to Young and Rubicam immediately after serving in the navy during the war, Weaver began, like big agency executives elsewhere, to plan for television. The newest medium's potential excited Weaver. In truth, he never encountered a new technology that did not arouse him. Weaver, it was often said, "is the only man who can reminisce about the future." Unlike his colleagues, Weaver refused to regard television as simply a new, more powerful sales instrument. If anything, his radio experience had convinced him that the TV networks, and not sponsors, must control what was broadcast. He approached all four networks about heading their television operations.[6]

When he became head of NBC, Weaver had no shortage of admirers. An often immodest memoir understates the extent to which his peers in broadcasting and advertising respected his abilities. "I have always thought you gave the agency business a lot of stature," observed the senior advertising executive Fairfax M. Cone. Both Frank Stanton and Hubbell Robinson Jr. of CBS sent letters of congratulations. Robinson, a former agency colleague, informed NBC president Niles Trammell, "You could not have chosen a better guy."[7]

Fortune smiled on Weaver in his choice of networks. CBS's Paley shared his goal of checking advertiser control over programming, but not enough to offer him a position. Frantic NBC executives, on the other hand, reeling from Paley's raids, were only too happy to hire him and grant him an autonomy over programming that Paley would never have conceded. Unlike Paley, David Sarnoff of RCA all but detested the broadcast side of his business. He "didn't seem to care how I managed NBC Television," Weaver recalled. "That was agreeable to me, because I didn't relish the thought of him looking over my shoulder. My methods weren't exactly conventional."[8]

"No Inevitable Pattern"

For NBC, Weaver was a smart addition for any number of reasons. Enormously self-confident, he would not be frustrated by the network's thick bureaucracy. Determined to fill out NBC's schedule, he ignored those who suggested the network move more cautiously. Weaver assumed that TV would require new rules. "We must gamble. We must experiment," he wrote in 1949. Indeed, he insisted that television would only prove successful if the medium's managers took risks. He dismissed those who argued that TV would mimic radio. "There is no inevitable pattern which [television] will follow, no inexorable development. Rather, some of us will determine and direct the advance of this medium. The only inexorability, in my opinion, is that television will go into the American home, and rapidly."[9] If he was a traditionalist about anything, it concerned the network's need to be profitable. "We are first of all engaged in a capitalist enterprise," he wrote in 1949, "which means we must make money, and make it soon."[10]

Weaver is the historian's tempter. Few broadcast executives possessed or so eagerly displayed his wide-ranging intelligence. Given the colorless, buttoned-down demeanor of Weaver's competitors, contemporary journalists found him a wonderful story. The *New Yorker*, the nation's leading literary magazine, ran a bemused two-part profile in 1954.[11] While at NBC, Weaver tirelessly composed lengthy speeches and memos. (Weaver, *Business Week* later observed, was "widely considered the greatest memo writer of his generation.")[12] Subsequent generations with access to one of several archives can revisit his career. One Weaver contemporary, Frank Stanton of CBS, was very much Weaver's intellectual equal, if not superior. But Stanton lacked Weaver's charisma.

Moreover, Stanton was an administrator, not a programmer. Like his employer, Paley, Stanton was far more cautious about television and its possibilities. Moreover, he left no comparable archival record.

Weaver and his admirers have tried to control the narrative. Weaver rescued NBC, reeling from the ill effects of Paley's raids. He set a successful schedule that overcame Columbia and then created a series of programming innovations that made NBC the most influential force in midcentury broadcasting. His cultural aspirations for the newest medium deeply impressed the nation's television critics. "The Weaver myth," a dissenting broadcasting historian wrote, "has grown to nearly unassailable proportions."[13]

Although much of the heroic version is true, Weaver had spent too many years in advertising to avoid inflating his achievements. They were not entirely his. Weaver had the advantage during his first three years of working under Joseph McConnell, who had replaced Trammell as NBC president in October 1949. McConnell shared some of Weaver's more idealistic notions about TV's possibilities and his misgivings about advertisers. Weaver could not have been so daring without a like-minded colleague.[14] McConnell granted him considerable authority. Weaver, the writer Goodman Ace concluded in mid–1952, "has been sneaked into a big job at NBC in charge of everything."[15]

Weaver did not always get his way. For nine months in 1953, following McConnell's departure, he found himself stripped of serious duties. Only late that year did he become president of the network. Until then, he had to delay implementing certain plans; he was unable to sign several promising performers, including Jackie Gleason, to network contracts, and they went on to star in hit shows for CBS.[16]

Accounts of Weaver's tenure rarely note that many of NBC's most successful programs during his years at the network did not carry his imprint. He apparently had to be talked into scheduling the children's Western, *Hopalong Cassidy*, in prime time; "Hoppy" during the 1950–51 season ranked ninth in the Nielsens, ahead of, among others, Ed Sullivan's variety hour on CBS.[17] Three of NBC's more resilient shows, Berle's, *Howdy Doody*, and *The Kraft Television Theatre*, were already on the air when Weaver came to the network. Three other NBC hits, *You Bet Your Life*, *Dragnet*, and *The Life of Riley*, had first been produced for radio, before Weaver's arrival.[18]

Weaver spent much of his early tenure dueling with CBS for talent. When Columbia tried to win over Uncle Miltie, Weaver personally

intervened with a counteroffer that the comic accepted (a "lifetime" services contract that actually expired after 1981, or more than twenty years before Berle's death).[19] The network struck similarly generous deals with leading NBC Radio stars, including Bob Hope and Eddie Cantor, while purchasing controlling interest in the company that produced *The Howdy Doody Show*. The network outbid Columbia for the comedian Groucho Marx, host of the successful radio quiz program *You Bet Your Life*, which NBC promptly brought to the home screen.[20]

While helping stave off talent raids by CBS, Weaver developed a set of principles that guided NBC's programming philosophy until his departure in September 1956. The first was a preference for live originations. Here he reaffirmed what some at the network had already been advocating.[21] Live telecasts honored the network radio assumption that consumers preferred simultaneous broadcasts. Viewers would feel cheated by a recorded performance. Live originations to Weaver made television "a medium of reality" compared to films. The sensation of seeing an unedited performance compensated for any production miscues—an actress forgetting her line or blocking. A filmed show, he remarked in 1950, "has safety and sureness." Yet it lacked "the feeling of performance of instantaneous entertainment that is created in a live show." "As a medium of reality," he wrote in 1951, NBC Television "will create far more hits than are likely to come from filmed shows."[22] Whenever possible, NBC programs should assume the form of the music hall or Broadway theater. NBC's *Kraft Television Theatre* opened an October 1954 telecast with announcer Ed Herlihy declaring, "The Kraft Television Theatre comes to you LIVE from New York. The play is being performed at the moment you see it—living theatre for your best television entertainment." And Herlihy closed the program with the reminder, "both our play and the demonstrations of Parkay Margarine and Kraft Links came to you live from New York—what you saw was performed the moment you saw it."[23]

In that regard, Weaver explicitly favored the theater as a model for television over all others. In an early memo, he referred to a "feeling of theater that I believe cardinal to success." Weaver admired Jackie Gleason enormously. But his filmed series *The Life of Riley* "is an unbelievable farce, presented without excitement or 'theater,' and comparable to a B movie in entertainment value. To me, this is a waste of a great property."[24] One of NBC's more well regarded situation comedies during the Weaver regime, *Mr. Peepers*, was telecast live on a New York stage.[25]

Many veteran entertainers, despite having long performed on stage, had to be persuaded to do their programs live. More and more of them looked for alternatives, including film. The pressure of performing before a national audience, under strict time constraints, could be intense. Eddie Cantor suffered a heart attack after hosting one program. Although NBC made an exception for one major star, Groucho Marx, when Cantor insisted on filming his program, he was let go. Weaver rejected Berle's request that his show be recorded.[26]

Notwithstanding the intrinsic virtues of live performance, to Weaver, such originations justified *broadcast* networks. From the start, Weaver contemplated competition from what he dubbed "celluloid networks." That is, new entrants in television that would compete with the established networks by offering stations filmed programming. William Boyd, with his *Hopalong Cassidy* features, had demonstrated that filmed series could be mass-produced and delivered to stations for a fee. (Tellingly, soon after Boyd began offering the Cassidy films to stations, NBC signed him to a network contract.)[27] Although most stations telecast Boyd's serials off evening prime time,[28] Weaver and others imagined a scenario in which a more ambitious and bigger entity, likely based in Hollywood, would directly challenge CBS and NBC with nothing but filmed series. Such a network would not require the coaxial cable for simultaneous transmission. The Chandler family, owners of the *Los Angeles Times* and an independent station in Los Angeles, tried to interest other TV-owning newspapers in producing nonnetwork film series. In some cases, advertising agencies were persuading individual NBC affiliates to carry filmed series they sponsored rather than network programming. On the other hand, NBC's Houston affiliate justified its refusal to air *Ford Theater* in September 1952 because it was on film. For the Houston station, Weaver concluded, "only live shows are network shows."[29]

The threat of a celluloid network loomed large when so many stations lacked direct network connections. Although by 1951 the coaxial cable linked the largest cities, some smaller communities had to wait for several years to receive a direct connection. Los Angeles and San Francisco, for example, were both linked in early September 1951. The San Diego area had to wait another year. In Alabama, Birmingham had a network hookup in late September 1950, but the cable did not reach Montgomery until 1954.[30] In late August 1954, noninterconnected stations included Altoona, Pennsylvania; Bismarck, North Dakota;

Evansville, Indiana; and Charleston, South Carolina.[31] Each network had elaborate procedures for conveying films or kinescopes of network programs to their affiliates. In an October 1949 memo, Weaver insisted that "the whole field of the NBC noninterconnected stations is a priority planning area that we must work on, and that those plans are more important than economy in that area."[32]

Weaver did not object to filmed series altogether. Some of NBC's mainstays during his regime, including *You Bet Your Life*, *Dragnet*, and *Life of Riley* were filmed. Weaver always anticipated that *some* prime-time series would be on film. In one of his first memos at the network, he wrote, "I do not believe that shows should be divided between live and film, but rather between good and bad." He frequently approached the motion picture studios about producing programs for NBC. Years later, Weaver wryly recalled having "been thrown out of all the major studios."[33]

It *was* an uneasy negotiation. A native of Los Angeles who, as a child, had observed the filming of D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, he regarded the studios knowingly. Weaver echoed those who had argued that filmmakers' excessive reliance on formula largely caused their box office problems in the 1940s. "Consistently and inevitably," the producer John Houseman concluded in 1948, the studios "have worked toward the stereotyped and the mediocre."[34] For their part, most filmmakers were in no rush to begin television production. Some offered Weaver the equivalent of the B picture, the cheaper feature shown in marginal movie houses. "Currently the Hollywood groups simply do not understand there is no magic in film, that a crumby B picture half-hour TV show will be terrible," he wrote late in 1949. "The fact that it's on film will not help it."[35]

Film was a false marker for another reason. Broadcasting was the true "mass" medium. Avid filmgoers, that is, those who went to the movies once or more a week, were a subset of the population. Radio listening, by comparison, constituted a daily ritual for virtually all Americans. Hollywood, in Weaver's opinion, too often produced films only for that segment of the national audience that regularly attended theaters. "We must beware of the terrible example of the movies," he remarked in 1953, "who went for a regular part of the whole audience and tailored a product for them so completely that motion picture going became a minority experience in American life." The continued shrinkage of the moviegoing audience in the early 1950s only increased Weaver's

conviction that Hollywood was incapable of producing programming that would appeal to the "great audience" of TV viewers.[36] Although a much-maligned lot in the late 1940s, advertising agents like Weaver who had worked in radio understood far better than film executives how to reach a mass audience. "The advertising responsibility," he later wrote, "is *to reach everyone*."[37]

Relatedly, Weaver believed that if television aimed to present both innovative popular and artistic programming, it should originate much of its programming in New York City. "The new glamor of the fifties will start where we start," Weaver wrote in 1949, "providing we are in Manhattan."[38] In the mid-twentieth century, New York City was the nation's cultural center, the home of the country's legitimate theater, its largest night clubs and performance halls. "The most important single thing to say about Manhattan in relation to the rest of the United States," the journalist John Gunther wrote in 1947, "is that it dominates what, for want of a better phrase, may be called American culture."[39] Gunther, a Manhattan resident, exaggerated only slightly. Notwithstanding its virtual monopoly in motion picture production, Los Angeles in the early 1950s was still in many ways a cultural backwater. If anything, the City of Angels appeared to celebrate the absence of the high cultural institutions that New York and Boston had nurtured for a century. "Los Angeles," concluded the historian Kevin Starr, "represented a triumph of the commonplace."[40]

The centrality of New York was easily seen on early television. In November 1954, *Advertising Age* reported, fifty of NBC's sponsored programs originated from New York, compared to twenty-seven in Hollywood. Most CBS sponsored shows were also New York–based.[41] Even Columbia's great hit *I Love Lucy*, though filmed in Los Angeles, took place in New York. Variety shows constantly reminded viewers of New York's place in show business. *The Admiral Broadway Revue* ended with a quintet singing, "We hope we've made a little bit of Broadway zoom right over the footlights and into your room."[42]

Weaver qualified his commitment to New York. He understood from the beginning that NBC would have to depend on Hollywood-based talent. "I cannot run television without Hollywood," he remarked in 1949.[43] Virtually all popular radio and motion picture performers, including NBC stars like Groucho Marx, lived in and around Los Angeles. Fred Allen was the great exception; he stubbornly refused to abandon New York and died in midtown walking his dog in 1956. Most

established talent, however, preferred to originate their programs on the West Coast and all but demanded that privilege once the coaxial cable reached Los Angeles. Those who stayed East found doing a show in New York to be an often exasperating enterprise. TV studios were spread about Manhattan and Brooklyn. Dressing rooms and wardrobes were never substantial enough. Plans to develop a large "television city" on Manhattan or Queens went unrealized. Perhaps the most dramatic scheme would have converted a huge tract of land along the East River into a new Radio City for all the networks; the land was subsequently used to build the United Nations headquarters. NBC, like CBS, began investing in West Coast studios in 1950 and 1951. Weaver himself urged the network to do so.[44]

Of more immediate concern to Weaver was stabilizing NBC's evening prime-time schedule. His initial strategy was wonderfully simple. He concentrated on the prime hours of prime time, 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. Most nights, he scheduled variety programs at 8:00 p.m., followed by dramatic shows at 9:00 p.m. These were hour-long original dramas, usually telecast live and originating from New York. Weaver's theory was that children as well as adults would watch the variety shows. At nine, the kids would go to bed or do their homework. The adults could take in the less child-friendly, more dour drama that NBC offered at nine.[45]

That approach helped to make NBC the most popular network during the 1950–51 and 1951–52 seasons. Fifteen of the twenty-five most-watched television programs in 1950–51 were on NBC, to eight on CBS. A year later, with CBS quickly demonstrating its show business acumen, NBC still held a fourteen to ten lead over Columbia. Even in Weaver's hometown, NBC was faring well. One ratings service indicated that early in 1952 eight of the fifteen most-watched programs in the Los Angeles area were on NBC, compared to two shows the year before.[46]

NBC was still scrambling to overcome the effects of Paley's raids, especially in slating the comedy-variety programs. NBC had retained the services of Bob Hope, as well as those of the comedy team of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis and others. But most insisted on limiting their television appearances. Hope, Martin, and Lewis had film and other commitments; Hope also feared wearing out his welcome if he appeared every seven days. Moreover, a weekly variety hour, telecast live, was a great deal of work; Berle was among the very few willing to endure the ordeal. Weaver's solution was to alternate hosts. NBC slated different

performers, including Eddie Cantor, Ed Wynn, and Jimmy Durante, for two different variety programs, *The Colgate Comedy Hour* and *The Four Star Revue* (subsequently *The All Star Revue*). One would appear every four weeks. Although not all performers were top draws, most had long backgrounds in vaudeville, film, and radio. Their transition to the small screen proved effective with one great exception. Fred Allen appeared too sick and too distracted and quickly withdrew as a host. His video failure was especially upsetting to Weaver, who had worked on Allen's radio program in the 1930s and admired the satirist more than anyone in show business. But NBC's other comics had enough appeal to generate strong ratings for both programs.[47]

Weaver's greatest prime-time triumph came on Saturday nights. None of the networks initially had much interest in scheduling programs that evening. In the fall of 1949, Columbia had two unsold hours on Saturday evenings. NBC telecast *Meet the Press*, a video press conference, at 9:30, an unsponsored court drama at 10, and nothing after 10:30. It was assumed the majority of set owners were out of the house seeing a movie or attending a party. Advertiser demand was slight. Weaver concluded that unattractive programming explained the absence of viewers—and advertisers. His response was ambitious: a three-hour variety program, he wrote, "easy to join at any time, and we hoped, difficult to depart from." It would be produced by Max Liebman who had successfully mounted theatrical revues at an adult summer camp in the Poconos, then on Broadway. Weaver had long liked Liebman's work, including a short-lived TV variety program, *The Admiral Broadway Revue*. Premiering in January 1949, the show starred the comedians Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca. Better written and produced than Berle's show (the jokes were original), *The Broadway Admiral Revue* did not rely on Caesar's capacity for mugging and willingness to cross-dress. Liebman himself spoke of bringing "the element of sophistication" to television. The program included ballet and opera performances.

Weaver's original Saturday night concept was too much for Liebman and the FCC, which forbade the three-hour single-show format. Liebman did agree to produce a weekly ninety-minute show, *Your Show of Shows*, featuring Caesar, Coca, and others from the Admiral program. Although the program retained the high cultural elements of *The Admiral Revue*—during a February 1951 program, Marguerite Piazza and others sang excerpts from Massenet's opera *Manon*—the comedy would be the more memorable. It regularly included satires of American and

foreign motion pictures. One, of a steamy love scene in *From Here to Eternity*, prompted a lawsuit from the film's producers. A ratings winner—its fans included President Eisenhower—*Your Show of Shows* confirmed Weaver's contention that appealing programming would draw viewers, even on a Saturday night. Indeed, Broadway theater owners, decrying lost ticket sales, demanded that Weaver move *Your Show of Shows* to another night. "The world started with Adam and Eve," Fred Allen declared on the program in 1951. "And television started with Sid and Imogene. Sid and Imogene are the Adam and Eve of television."[48]

Containing the Sponsor, Expanding the Schedule

Your Show of Shows served another managerial objective. Weaver wanted NBC to control the programs. In radio, ad agencies had exercised extraordinary power over not only the production of series but frequently their time slots. There was every indication this pattern was being repeated with television. Admiral canceled *The Admiral Broadway Revue* because, it claimed, the show was creating a demand for its TV receivers that the company could not meet.[49] All in all, Weaver considered surrendering such authority to advertisers unacceptable. Sponsors could dictate when a program appeared, even if that contradicted the overall objectives of the network, including ones involving NBC's public service obligations. Then, too, sole sponsors could panic over ratings and tamper with or cancel a promising program. Major clients, he wrote in a seventeen-page memo to McConnell in November 1951, "want shows of their own. They want to be able to cancel every thirteen weeks. They want to take the summer off. They want to put on entertainment that will be inoffensive to everyone. They have no real interest in public service. They have no real interest, in most cases, in giving the public anything but escape, and selling them their products. They give lip-service to NBC ideals."[50]

The advertiser's power could be checked, he determined, if NBC successfully launched longer programs like the ninety-minute *Your Show of Shows*. "Departing from usual custom," Weaver wrote, the show would have three different participating sponsors; no one advertiser would underwrite and, therefore, in effect control the show.[51] They would be expensive propositions—and the network would have to produce the programs. Yet that would advantage NBC if the programs attracted large audiences. They would be too pricey for any one sponsor. But too popular for advertisers to ignore, even if that meant losing their

authority over the program itself. As Weaver wrote in 1953, he was "creating advertising values so good that advertisers would buy them despite their dislike of them."[52]

Weaver began championing what he dubbed "the magazine concept" of television advertising. TV would be like mass circulation periodicals that sold space to a variety of advertisers. None would dare attempt—nor be able—to dictate editorial content. "You don't find many advertising men telling the [*Saturday Evening Post*] how to rewrite their feature articles," he commented in 1949.[53]

Weaver had to sell his idea to unhappy advertising agencies. They initially resisted sharing sponsorship of two NBC variety shows during the 1950–51 season, even after the programs proved popular, and the network had to offer participation at a discount.[54] The loss of sole sponsorship, some agency executives feared, risked the loss of the "gratitude factor," a long-established broadcast rule. Consumers expressed their gratitude to the sponsor of a show by purchasing its products. But Weaver cited NBC research indicating that his network's popular programs with participating sponsors generated more goodwill than did single-sponsor series. And dividing sponsorship gave smaller companies the opportunity to enter television. With the magazine concept, he told a Chicago group, "every company has the same right to a selling opportunity as the giants who can buy up blocks of time."[55]

In that regard, Weaver and others realized that network television was assuming a different production pattern. In the 1930s and 1940s, agencies had produced individual radio series. Ad executives like Weaver had been directly involved in their assemblage. With television proving a more expensive and complicated proposition, most agencies found it more sensible to delegate the actual production of TV shows. Agencies produced only one out of nine network programs, Weaver contended in a 1953 memo. Agencies could either contract with an independent production company, or with NBC.[56]

Weaver did not propose a vertical integration of production and networking. He was determined to limit the power of individual sponsors, which required that NBC greatly increase its own programming expenditures. Yet he did not advocate that the network take over production and ownership of shows. He was aware that even he did not have a monopoly on good programming ideas. "The major interest in [*sic*] NBC," he remarked in 1949, "is to get the best shows, not to get NBC packages, on the air." Five years later he commented, "We will

continue to take shows from anyone, and usually let anyone produce them."[57]

Nevertheless, if the network assumed too much control over programming, might not the Justice Department or others in Washington object? Weaver confidently insisted that NBC's overall record of public service, vigorously publicized by the network's public relations specialists, would overcome such threats. "If we honestly build a great public information and entertainment machine along the lines that we have started," he wrote late in 1951, "public opinion will force government acceptance of our requirements."[58]

Breaking the sponsor's power had another advantage. Advertisers routinely negotiated for specific time periods. Weaver not only sought to control which programs appeared on the schedule but when. As a colleague reported in June 1952, Weaver recommended "a procedure whereby NBC would program each period with shows of its own choosing, designed to fit best into the overall entertainment structure, instead of trying to accommodate programs brought in by sponsors even though they might have a weakening effect on the schedule."[59] Firestone Rubber Company might want its musical program *The Voice of Firestone* aired on Mondays at 8:30. Network audience research and Weaver's intuition told him that *Voice* would not draw or hold as many viewers at that hour as another show. NBC's total audience would decline if Firestone were permitted to have its way. NBC dropped *Voice* after the 1953–54 season and offered the tire maker another program, which it declined.[60]

The magazine concept undergirded Weaver's most lasting innovation, *The Today Show*. Premiering in January 1952, the news program originated weekdays from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. (ET). As in the case of *Your Show of Shows*, no single advertiser would underwrite such a daring undertaking. It would be a network property. *Today* was not nearly as expensive to produce as an extravaganza like *Your Show of Shows.* But potential underwriters deemed its time slot highly problematical. None of the networks had produced programming at that hour. In January 1951, New York City's WNBT, NBC's flagship station, did not commence broadcasting until 10:56 a.m.[61] Set owners were thought to be too busy preparing for work or organizing their households to watch television. However, Weaver was certain, as he had been when dealing with the Saturday night schedule, that TV viewing would increase if a network created the right programming.[62]

Today struggled. Some affiliates, including ones in Milwaukee and Buffalo, refused to carry the program. Most critics initially panned the show. There were technical glitches, notably attempting to provide a continuous headline tape during the broadcast; some receivers could not pick up the headline.[63] Worse, the ratings were tiny compared to those for later in the broadcast day. The program was not initially telecast on the West Coast; central time zone affiliates had to carry *Today* from 6:00 to 8:00 a.m.[64] Sponsors proved hard to find, even at bargain rates. In fact, *Today* lost $1.5 million its first year.[65] An aggressive new sales team helped overcome some advertiser resistance. Audiences increased after the show's producer introduced a new cast member, J. Fred Muggs, a chimpanzee. A Weaver aide somewhat self-consciously likened Muggs's participation to the comic page of a newspaper. Muggs provided much spontaneous hilarity. Not all of it welcome. He caused an international incident by behaving badly during *Today*'s coverage of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. "Those responsible should be ashamed," Jack Gould complained. But Muggs's casting intrigued many children and the chimp had saved the show. "In three months," executive producer Richard A. R. Pinkham recalled, "our ratings had climbed to a ten from a state where we had been owing Nielsen points."[66]

Just as NBC intended *Today* to encourage set use in the early mornings, Weaver targeted the late evening. CBS in 1949 and 1950 had success with an 11:00 p.m. talk program hosted by the actress Faye Emerson. "At that time," wrote the journalist Pete Martin, "there was nothing on TV at that hour of night but prize fights, roller derbys and lady wrestlers. A viewer rating of ten would have been good." Emerson drew a 24 percent rating.[67] Without ever crediting Emerson or Columbia for the inspiration, Weaver and NBC experimented with a late-night venture, *Broadway Open House*, debuting in May 1950. *Broadway Open House* ran from eleven to midnight on weeknights. Hosted by the comedian Jerry Lester and others, the program mixed musical performances with comic sketches as well as interviews. *Broadway Open House* proved, *Advertising Age* observed later, "that not everybody goes to bed before 11." Feuding among cast members doomed the enterprise. The show was canceled in August 1951. Two years later, NBC's New York station launched another late-night program starring Steve Allen. Allen's low-key mix of comedy sketches, musical performances, and interviews lured viewers to the station. Network executives in September

1954 put Allen's program, renamed *The Tonight Show*, on the network schedule. Allen, *Newsweek* averred, was keeping "2 million people up past their bedtime night after night."[68]

That year, Weaver tried to extend his strategy by launching the weekday morning program *Home*. Like *Today*, *Home* followed the magazine format. *Home* targeted housewives with a preponderance of features on cooking and consumption. (Weaver originally titled the program *Shopping*.) Although cooking shows had been among the earliest programming genres, Weaver contended that *Home*'s mix of features would make it unique, the video equivalent of women's magazines like *Ladies' Home Journal*. Producers sought to appeal to middle-class homemakers who found daytime alternatives too lowbrow. "I would like to see the show attract to daytime television a whole new income level who now associate daytime television with the dreck of daytime radio, and have stayed away from it in droves," a producer wrote Weaver. "We do not want to alienate lower education levels; we want to keep them but attract higher type dames in *addition*."[69] In August 1954, *Home* included features on Korean art and the Ballet Russe, as well as an interview with the wife of the premier of France. Most critics, however, concluded that *Home* had failed to live up to its billing as a unique video experience for women. Weaver's penchant for hyperbole ill served the network. *Home*, he promised, would prove "one of the greatest TV experiences that a woman could have." Instead, *Home* often painfully resembled its competition. An October program featured the cooking "editor" presenting a pot roast in celebration of National Beef and Vegetable Week.[70]

NBC affiliates did not object to Weaver's expansion of the schedule. A network offering, especially one with potential, spared stations the cost of local originations. NBC's St. Paul affiliate, KSTP, had tried to mount programs similar to *Today* and *Home* without success. Stations could telecast old motion pictures but the inventory of feature films was at first small and unappealing. With the exception of United Artists, the studios refused until the mid–1950s to release to TV stations more recent, and more desirable, features. Late night on KSTP, a station executive wrote in 1956, had been filled by "old theatrical films in which both [the] audience and [advertisers] were not too much interested. The coming of Steve Allen gave our audience something that was fresh and up to the minute and the type of program late hour viewers thoroughly enjoy. Only can a network give us such a show."[71]

"Conversation Piece of the Nation"

Weaver's most venturesome initiative—and most daring application of the magazine concept—came in the evenings. Beginning in September 1954, NBC launched expensive ninety-minute programs that Weaver characteristically dubbed "spectaculars." They appeared on three different nights every four weeks, though the rotation varied. Some weeks might include three spectaculars, others none. Most originated live from New York. Liebman, "the Ziegfeld of Television," an NBC publicist declared, was assigned one night (Saturdays) and usually produced adaptations of Broadway musicals.[72] Every fourth Sunday, a spectacular faced CBS's popular Ed Sullivan program. Every fourth Monday, Weaver scheduled an NBC spectacular, *Producer's Showcase*, against three of CBS's most popular series, *Burns and Allen*, *Arthur Godfrey*, and *I Love Lucy*. The spectaculars' costs would be extraordinary and inhibit underwriters. "Coin is no object," *Variety* reported; the shows were well above the budgets of most individual advertisers. Only one, Oldsmobile, talked Weaver into permitting it to be the sole sponsor of the Liebman spectaculars.[73]

The former ad agent made extravagant claims about his newest creation. Because the spectacular made far fewer demands on performers than weekly programs, individuals otherwise committed to working in film or theater could participate. The spectacular "is the form that enables artists from other media to meet the creative challenge of television without dropping whatever other ventures they are engaged in." All in all, spectaculars "are the showcase for the best efforts of the greatest creative talents in show business," he commented in June 1955. "They create talk and excitement and controversy and they have an aura of newness and freshness." "When *Producer's Showcase* was planned," Weaver remarked later, "it was hoped that it would be the most exciting series in the history of television."[74]

Despite his misgivings about Hollywood and preference for live originations, the NBC president aggressively sought to involve *some* in the film industry in creating network spectaculars. In one of his first projections of the concept, he anticipated that about one-third of the network's specials would be "high budgeted motion pictures, made especially for television." "We have been working in Hollywood," he wrote in March 1954, "to set up a realistic way in which the best brains from all of motion picture work on the creative side can be harnessed to

our medium." He tried to persuade MGM and Disney to produce one or more specials. A number of well-regarded directors and producers, including Alfred Hitchcock, expressed interest. But none signed on.[75]

Back east, the spectacular strategy disrupted the network's relations with advertisers. For the Monday night schedule for 1954–55, three different sponsors, including Firestone, had their programs canceled to allow for one spectacular a month. Three Mondays in 1954–55, NBC scheduled a new variety program starring Sid Caesar and a new dramatic series, *Medic*. Weaver offered the three sponsors participation on the Caesar show; only one agreed. Weaver's message was clear. NBC would transform industry practice, he told *Advertising Age*. "Advertisers will have to change the habits of a lifetime, and nobody likes to change, but the value considerations make it worth while."[76]

The spectacular, Weaver and his aides argued, would quickly become a powerful and enduring promotional vehicle. Madison Avenue might prefer the weekly half-hour program, yet the spectacular was actually less of a risk. Weaver assistant Michael Dann wrote in April 1955 that most half-hour series were canceled after one season or less. Moreover, the NBC specials promised far larger and more captivated audiences than most successful half-hour situation comedies. (CBS relied heavily on the thirty-minute series.) Only one during the 1954–55 season, *I Love Lucy*, had a rating over 40. "The half-hour format," Dann argued, "is a real gamble on television."[77]

Left unstated was the increasingly obvious: the spectacular strategy was very much a response to NBC's declining position, especially in prime time. Many of the network's biggest hits and stars, including Berle and Caesar, were losing their hold on viewers. Some of the variety show comics were wearing out their welcome as well.[78] In April 1953, while Weaver was forced into a seven-month exile from programming responsibility, CBS had overtaken NBC in the ratings and in advertising billings. Affiliates became uneasy; one of NBC's more important affiliates, St. Louis's KSD, considered switching to CBS. An angry Sarnoff was momentarily willing to take gambles, however costly. "General Sarnoff made it clear," the NBC board secretary reported a month later, "that the objective was to place NBC in unquestioned first position in television and in radio and that he would go along with any steps which appeared to him effective in achieving this objective, recognizing that it took precedence over a profit objective for the next year or two."[79] The general's mind, in other words, was unusually open to unorthodoxy.

Industry convention called for the network to develop new programs and personalities to compete more effectively with Columbia's growing inventory of hit shows. Ever the heretic, however, Weaver argued as early as October 1950 that consumers of *television* had greater expectations for the newest medium than they had for radio or even motion pictures. Weekly series or daytime dramas would not hold their attention indefinitely. "Television is too great and too powerful to be shackled with chains of custom and usage from radio," Weaver remarked in 1954.[80] "Watching the same TV shows each week is like raising a family," Max Liebman commented. "There comes a time when you wish they [would] get married and leave home."[81] Television *had* to offer spectaculars. Or viewers would stop viewing. Several television specials, *The Ford 50th Anniversary Show* (June 1953), which was aired simultaneously on both NBC and CBS, as well as General Foods's *Rodgers and Hammerstein Cavalcade* (March 1954), had garnered huge audiences, seeming proof of Weaver's theory.[82]

Then, too, launching the spectacular aided NBC's parent corporation. Although Weaver had been championing spectaculars since 1950, he could only commit NBC to the concept four years later.[83] By then, their higher expenses could be rationalized as a boost for RCA color television. After a bitter battle with the FCC and in court, RCA had supplanted CBS in developing a color television system. General Sarnoff had become as thoroughly and single-mindedly committed to color TV as he had been to black-and-white television. With RCA prepared to introduce a line of color receivers in 1954, NBC spectaculars were an ideal if pricey means of promotion. The network's specials were telecast in color, making them more expensive than competing programming on CBS or ABC. The average ninety-minute spectacular cost $250,000 compared to about $75,000 for regular programming. Yet the added expense would in theory create great interest in color television.[84] NBC had recent precedent on its side. Much as Berle and Howdy Doody had helped to spark a demand for televisions in 1948 and 1949, Weaver expected his long specials to encourage consumers to purchase their first color TVs. NBC's fall 1954 color programming, he predicted, "will make television once again the conversation piece of the nation [and] will again sell sets by the millions."[85]

Spectaculars possessed a secondary benefit for NBC, if not all of network television. By definition, spectaculars were a response to proponents of pay television systems. Zenith and other interests had long

insisted that only a subscription or fee service would bring the kind of entertainment NBC was suddenly offering. NBC, *Variety* observed, "appears intent on killing the 'toll-tv scare' all by itself."[86]

Although Weaver himself rarely mentioned pay TV, he was certain that network television would lose viewers if it continued to depend heavily on the weekly and weekday series. Obeying the radio rule, broadcasters and sponsors had long cultivated among consumers the habit of taking in a given program every weekday or once a week. Yet Weaver believed the habit principle had been honored too faithfully. Network radio had lost both critical favor and listeners in the 1940s, he insisted, by scheduling too many series, too many of which imitated one another. John Crosby had issued this indictment in a 1948 *Atlantic* article. Radio, Jack Gould of the *New York Times* argued, "had no greater disease than the dread plague of sameness. The fact that the same old programs rattled along year after year, without interruption, was one of the principal reasons why the sound broadcasting medium was such an easy mark for the upstart TV. It wasn't just the novelty of TV; it was also the public's incredible weariness with the same old routine of radio."[87] If TV followed radio's custom, Weaver remarked in 1954, "as much as 40 percent of the TV audience may drift away as it did in radio." Consumers "might even go back to reading books and conversation."[88] Advocates of the spectacular had concluded, reported *Variety*'s George Rosen, that "TV's only salvation as the vital core of today's show biz and tomorrow's shooting-for-the-rainbow lies in the 'new revitalization' and departure from the orthodox patterns of the past."[89]

In retrospect, Weaver devoted great attention to consumers who did not watch much television, what he dubbed "light viewers." "Heavy viewers" never missed an episode of *Dragnet* or *I Love Lucy.* Indeed, Weaver wrote in 1954, heavy viewers "are generally watching television no matter what is on and making the selection from among the things that are before them." A second group of viewers were much more selective—and were ignored by ratings-fixated advertising agencies. These were often better educated, more well-to-do consumers too busy to commit themselves to watching specific programs every week. Still others considered most weekly series unworthy. (Weaver and his wife limited their two children to two hours of television a day.)[90] Winning the light viewer would fit Weaver's intention of increasing the total audience for television, and attract advertisers of more refined goods that did not include television in their planning. Daytime audiences

would be won by *Home.* Spectaculars, he argued, constituted a "special inducement for the light viewers, for the people who might be drifting away from television, for the people who have special interests and are interested in special arts and activities."[91] "You cannot build a service for 100 percent of the people," Weaver remarked, "with conventional entertainment."[92]

In the evening, to lure the television snob, NBC mounted spectaculars and promoted them heavily. Extensive publicity would encourage what was later dubbed "appointment viewing." (One TV critic in 1956 claimed to have received 41 press releases for one spectacular.) "Every Spectacular," Robert W. Sarnoff explained, "will have the quality and character of a big Broadway premiere, with all the excitement and audience anticipation that goes along with a new opening. People will make dates to see a Spectacular."[93]

NBC's deemphasis on the habit principle would be resisted, first and foremost by advertisers. Most considered the habit principle to be an article of faith. *Weekly* ratings were the measure of a program's following. Undaunted, Weaver tried to create a new convention. He actively promoted the principle of *cumulative ratings*, that is, the total audience over a four-week period, rather than a weekly average, to measure "the effective circulation" of a program. Here Weaver was borrowing a sales pitch made by *Life* and other weekly periodicals that estimated the total readership of their magazines over time.[94] Weaver also contended that the ratings did not measure the *impact* of special programs over regular series. "In Weaver's analysis," one trade observer noted, "impact replaced volume."[95]

"Adding to the Cultural Tastes of People"

Weaver extended his unorthodoxy into the daytime schedule by targeting a radio staple, the soap opera. He shared the disdain that better-educated, upper-middle-class women—and men—had for that program genre. Cultural critics held the soap opera in special contempt. The humorist James Thurber had written a scathing essay, "Soapland," on the daytime genre in the late 1940s; two of Weaver's favorite comics, Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding, regularly mocked soap operas. Although the genre underwent many changes later in the century, the postwar soaps were, the historian Ruth Rosen observed, "deeply melancholy, somber and moralistic."[96] Still, the soap opera had proven a relatively inexpensive, and very profitable, component of the daytime schedule. And no

broadcast program type better typified the habit principle. Soap opera episodes on radio and TV routinely concluded by not concluding; the lack of resolution of a story line was intended to addict the listener or viewer, to lure her into turning on the program the next day. "This indeed is the art of the Soap," Marya Mannes wrote. "To move without moving ahead, to protract solution almost beyond endurance, to have in readiness new crises when the last one is finally solved."[97]

Despite the soap opera's durability, Weaver understood its limitations. Many better-educated, middle-class women, desirable to advertisers, spurned the daytime serial; a mid–1940s survey suggested about half of women working at home did not listen to soaps. When asked in a late 1953 survey why they did not view TV during the day, just over one-fifth of those polled expressed a lack of interest in the programming. Weaver sought alternative programming, like *Home*, to capture this potential television viewer.[98]

He plotted something else as well: a reinvention and elevation of daytime drama. "When we started in television, and soaps began to rear their ugly heads," he wrote in a July 1955 memo, "there was a big conflict between some of us who felt that television was going to be different enough from radio so that the old technique would not work; the old soap opera radio technique would not work." CBS appeared to be disproving that hypothesis. Columbia had enjoyed success scheduling soaps, he acknowledged, but mainly because NBC had countered with nothing but "bad shows." NBC should offer daytime drama, Weaver argued, but not the dramatic serial, with crises ever unresolved. "We should try for stories more complete in themselves from day to day because of the higher absorption and the tension demands of television over radio."[99]

Debuting in September 1955, *Matinee Theatre* presented weekday, hour-long dramas modeled after the prime-time anthology dramas. The specific concept belonged to Albert McCleery, a veteran producer and director of prime-time TV drama. *Matinee Theatre* would meet Weaver's goal of displacing the soap opera. "We are trying to upgrade dramatic entertainment in the daytime for women," he wrote. It was an extraordinary commitment for NBC, which budgeted the series at $5 million its first year. Some were aired in color; most were telecast live.[100] The demands on McCleery were enormous. On any given day, he had five different programs in rehearsal. A former army officer who insisted on being called "colonel," McCleery ran his complex operation, *Time*

reported, "as if he were a field marshal." Contemporary dramas, the anthology staple, were the most common production. Some, in fact, were adaptations of dramas that had already been produced in the evening. Excluding those teleplays, just under 60 percent of the first stories purchased for *Matinee Theatre* were original material.[101]

McCleery echoed Weaver's objectives for *Matinee Theatre*. Like Weaver, he was a cultural optimist. "People like honest, literate stuff at any time," he told *Time*, "not the soap-opera kind."[102] Moreover, *Matinee Theatre* would carry forward NBC's cultural missionary work. "I hope we are adding to the cultural tastes of people," McCleery remarked early in 1956. "We are adding sophistication to the ordinary person's life that was lacking before." Moreover, based on initial viewer mail, up to 150 letters daily, *Matinee Theatre* was indeed reaching the "light viewers" that Weaver coveted. *Matinee Theatre*, McCleery commented, "has created a new audience for TV. People who never bothered to watch television in the daytime do so now."[103]

Matinee Theatre invited an expectations problem. The network's promotional apparatus, what the *Chicago Sun-Times* critic dubbed "NBC's wind machine," widely publicized *Matinee Theatre*. Based on such handouts, concluded one prominent West Coast TV columnist, *Matinee Theatre* "is to be daytime television's most ambitious undertaking to date and further evidence that NBC is head and shoulders above CBS in imaginative programming on a quality level."[104] Some critics could not help but be disappointed by some of the early productions. The *Boston American*'s TV critic, Anthony La Camera, all but dismissed *Matinee Theatre*'s first play as "detergent drama, non-serialized." NBC had promised "that the live afternoon program would bear the quality of nighttime television drama and avoid the banalities of daytime soap opera," La Camera wrote. The teleplay, *Beginning Now*, "not only contained all the elements of regular soap opera, but it also managed to squeeze them into 60 minutes. Where soap opera would have taken the 'Matinee Theatre' plot and drawn it over a few score episodes, the new NBC hour unmercifully threw the entire works at us in one melodramatic lump."[105]

In time, *Matinee Theatre* established itself with many critics. Perhaps NBC *was* breaking new ground. In January 1956, Stan Anderson of the *Cleveland Press* favorably compared individual *Matinee* productions with several decades of "silly soapers." "Before this we had ridiculous dramas which went on and on for years about some neurotic woman's failure

to capture a man. This sort of abortive drama probably set our country back a century. It is, therefore, with some amount of pride that NBC can offer the adult Matinee Theatre drama."[106]

"Information Optimist"

Matinee Theatre can be seen as one more example of Weaver's cultural ambitions for the newest medium. Unlike most broadcasters, except possibly Sarnoff himself, Weaver promoted TV's cultural possibilities without the calculating nod to regulators or opinion leaders generally. Most contemporaries, CBS's Frank Stanton being the most obvious example, highlighted their network's more self-conscious productions with an eye to impressing someone in Washington or at the *New York Times*. Not Weaver. In his numerous memos and speeches, rarely if ever did he suggest the network might be doing such noble things to placate industry critics. He operated from personal conviction. Now and then, though not always, he evoked America's Cold War with the Soviet Union to justify his policies. With the Korean War under way, he told NBC affiliates, "we are in the business of influencing the minds of our people, whether we like it or not. To fail to plan to influence those minds constructively is to betray our trust in a great historical crisis. For we live in a time of troubles, and once again western civilization is under attack. No group will have more influence in building—or not building—the strength of character, the inner discipline, the basic fortitude which we as a people will need in this crisis."[107]

What made the NBC executive think American viewers would accept such instruction? Given the history of American mass culture before and after his regime, such cultural missionary work on the part of a network chief executive officer appears baffling if not self-destructive. Yet despite years working at major advertising agencies, which had long since given up granting customers much rationality, Weaver lacked a cynicism about the mass audience; he refused to hold his viewers in contempt. Indeed, he dubbed himself an "information optimist." "Weaver's confidence in broadcasting as a means of bettering mankind is unshakable," wrote Thomas Whiteside in his *New Yorker* profile.[108] "We don't want to give the people what they want," he remarked in 1955. "We want to give the people something that will make more of them want more of the better shows."[109] Here Weaver turned Mencken's dictum on its head. NBC, a Weaver aide remarked, championed the "value-theory of television programming," which "rests on the Idea that no

one ever went broke over-estimating the intelligence of the American people. Our belief is that in order to hold and continue to attract the mass audience we must program up and not down."[110]

Americans only needed to be introduced to high culture to gain an appreciation for it, Weaver maintained. The *visual* presentation of classical music and dance would create its own demand. One NBC executive explained, "The public has never been exposed to the kind of quality that has been the province of the elite for centuries. Give it to them and they'll want more."[111] Weaver spoke of creating "a society in which every man is an Athenian."[112]

Weaver's cultural egalitarianism may have had another explanation: he suffered from a classic mass communicator fallacy, confusing himself with his viewers. He was a man of insatiable curiosity, a voracious reader whose staff talks frequently included so many literary and classical allusions as to leave many an admiring aide befuddled. Perhaps he was envisioning a network *he would watch*. There was little evidence from radio or film that high culture would prove a ratings winner. Classical music broadcasts had declining audiences. Indeed, in the interwar years, the opera was a frequently successful comic foil. During the final scene in the Marx Brothers' popular *Night at the Opera* (1935), one of the brothers substitutes the orchestra's operatic score with "Take Me Out to the Ball Game."

A closer look, however, suggests something else. The Marx Brothers sabotaged an opera performance to advance the cause of the film's romantic hero, an aspiring tenor. They were deriding the class pretensions surrounding high culture, not high culture per se. Weaver in that regard was a high cultural democrat. Americans, regardless of income or education, deserved exposure to classical performance. Culture was not something that only a small minority of Americans in the largest cities should experience. "To program for the intellectual alone is easy," he remarked early in 1955. "To make us all into intellectuals—there is the challenge."[113] "We look upon television," he told a British advertising group in 1955, "as a miraculous port through which every man can look out upon a fascinating wide, wide world. Eyes that a generation ago would have rarely strayed above the ground because of status or class or other misfortune now see anything that the richest, the most privileged, the most cultured man in any state of society could ever see for himself." NBC's "grand design," he declared, was "the creation of all-people elite."[114]

Unknowingly, Weaver sought to overturn a century-long imposition of class over culture. In America's largest cities in the mid-nineteenth century, the well-to-do transformed cultural institutions like the theater and opera house into separate spheres that excluded the working classes. "Theater no longer functioned as an expressive form that embodied all classes within a shared public space," Lawrence W. Levine wrote. Shakespeare "had been converted from a popular playwright whose dramas were the property of those who flocked to see them, into a sacred author who had to be protected from ignorant audiences and overbearing actors threatening the integrity of his creations."[115] This argument extended to the postwar years, when some assailed Laurence Olivier's 1948 film adaptation of *Hamlet.* Olivier excised nearly two hours and 60 percent of the dialogue of Shakespeare's play, contributing, mourned Eric Bentley, to "the horribly desecratory recent trend towards popularization-cum-prostitution of the Bard." Alan Dent, who collaborated on the adaptation, confessed, "One has to choose between making the meaning clear to 2,000,000 cinemagoers and causing 2,000 Shakespearean experts to wince."[116] When, in 1953, the soprano Helen Traubel of the Metropolitan Opera agreed to perform at a prominent Chicago night club and sing popular American songs, the Met's imperious general manager Rudolph Bing publicly criticized her. She should stick to Wagner. Popular and operatic songs, Bing declared, did not "mix very well."[117]

Unlike Bing, Weaver *wanted* to mix it up. Cultural enlightenment, he realized, often had to be achieved on the sly. As the critic Marya Mannes mused, "don't throw it in their face; sneak it up on 'em." Between comic sketches on *Your Show of Shows*, Liebman, one admirer recalled, "thought nothing of putting two Jews in a delicatessen and asking them to sing bits of *La Boheme*." He made the opera singer Marguerite Piazza a regular cast member.[118] "Opera or the ballet is not a mass art," Weaver remarked in 1950. But "ballet or opera judiciously done in great entertainment shows with tremendous circulations will broaden the interest in these arts."[119] The Met's Helen Traubel appeared as a guest star on several *Four Star Revues* hosted by Jimmy Durante in 1950 and 1951. During one sketch, she dressed as Brunhild, to which Durante replied, "Holy smoke, she's been drafted!" Traubel and Durante got on so well that they eventually recorded an album together and appeared in a Las Vegas act.[120] On *The U.S. Royal Showcase*, April 27, 1952, the Met's Hilde Gueden not only performed but talked baseball with New York Giants manager Leo Durocher and his actress wife.[121]

For Kate Smith's variety hour during the 1951–52 season, McCleery directed short dramatic segments. These could be serious as well as ambitious, especially for what was ostensibly a musical variety hour, for example, miniversions of Maxwell Anderson's ponderous *Anne of the Thousand Days*, with Rex Harrison and Lilli Palmer, and Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* with Charles Laughton. More often, they were very condensed versions of NBC's original dramas. Broadway playwright Arthur Miller composed one. In *Beginner's Luck*, by the veteran writer Ernest Lehman, two strangers meet in a bar. Both claim to be single; the man is revealed to be married, with children. In another, telecast January 30, a very serious Fred Allen plays a father who establishes the identity of his son's killer, who then takes poison.[122]

Such moments explain Weaver's fondness for the sixty- or ninety-minute variety show. The half-hour situation comedy was too tightly edited to allow such cultural moments—and Weaver abhorred an overreliance on the sitcom. How could one educate viewers? When did *I Love Lucy* run an episode called "Lucy and Ethel Go to the Met"?

Weaver tried to institutionalize what he dubbed the "inform while you entertain" method. "Every show can inform, enlighten, inspire our people—not all the time and not openly preaching or teaching." In January 1952, he instituted a "responsibility" campaign. Entertainment shows, he asserted, were not absolved of their responsibility to enlighten. All producers and directors received a directive admonishing them to integrate "informational, instructional, cultural and inspirational material without in anyway vitiating the entertainment power of the telecasts." These might encompass including the U.S. vice president or an opera performance on a variety show. "Through our approach," NBC vice president Charles R. Denny explained, "the whole audience, over the course of time, is exposed to the best in literature and music and fine arts." Every producer was to submit a monthly report describing these efforts. To Weaver's dismay, some refused to take this homework very seriously.[123]

Weaver's cultural missionary work often appeared on the Sabbath. Until the 1960s, when sporting contests began attracting viewers and advertisers, broadcasters slated much of their public service programming on Sunday afternoon. Audiences were small; it was thought most viewers—especially men—were too busy with family-related activities or chores to watch television. "Sunday is the day to be outdoors . . . to drive, to mow the lawn, to swim, to play golf, to sail, to nap," wrote

the TV critic Marya Mannes. "On Sunday, the time when most people turn on their sets is after seven."[124] Industry insiders referred to the "Sunday ghetto." But if a broadcaster simply wished to impress critics and regulators, slating more ambitious fare on Sunday afternoons was far preferable than later in the day, when audiences and advertisers had different expectations. Weaver understood this rule. NBC scheduled productions of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, starring the veteran Shakespearean actor Maurice Evans, on the Sabbath, as well as an adaptation of *The Magic Flute*.[125] In perhaps the most breathtaking gesture, NBC in March 1956 telecast Olivier's filmed version of *Richard III* several hours before its theatrical release. Up to 25 million people viewed the film, more, the *New York Times* later noted, "than had ever watched any Shakespeare production in history."[126] "I always hope," the composer Richard Rodgers remarked, "that I have no dates on Sunday afternoon because that's when the viewer really is fed. I dare anyone to watch TV from noon until evening on Sundays and honestly say he hasn't been stimulated."[127]

The right combination of programs, Weaver averred, would capture both light viewers like Rodgers and the much more typical—and unknown—heavy viewer. "Basically," he wrote in 1956, "we reach the entire American public with *some* of our programs. Our circulation objective is to reach 100% of all sets and 100% of all homes with sets. This calls for a tremendous variety in the kinds of material we broadcast."[128]

Much as Weaver heralded TV's cultural possibilities, the NBC executive was no cultural snob. He regularly attended rehearsals of Sid Caesar's *Your Show of Shows* and laughed at the jokes; he returned and laughed again at the same jokes during the network telecast. He appeared at the end of the final show. If he had a show business hero, it was Fred Allen, not Laurence Olivier.[129] All told, Weaver was not trying to transform NBC into an Americanized British Broadcasting Corporation. "BBC by its very nature will not do what commercial television must do," he wrote in 1955. "Commercial television, to be successful, must attract the big audience—everyone."[130] If anything, Weaver imagined NBC operating in a space between a relentlessly high cultural BBC and the almost as relentlessly mass cultural CBS.

Weaver was not alone in this kind of cultural missionary work. *Life* magazine, the nation's most popular weekly, self-consciously attempted to educate its readers. This followed the expectations of the magazine's founder, Henry R. Luce. Photo essays on the world's news and celebri-

ties would be accompanied by sermons on art and history. The same issue of *Life*, wrote the critic Dwight Macdonald, "will present a serious exposition of atomic energy followed by a disquisition on Rita Hayworth's love life."[131]

Weaver had the misfortune of being a mass communicator during a period when leading public intellectuals like Macdonald decried mass culture. Although a progressive politically, Macdonald mocked attempts to popularize high culture as "midcult." He savaged *Life*'s attempts to educate and ridiculed the Ford Foundation's *Omnibus* program.[132] "Some very respectable critics," wrote one observer a decade later, "have argued that the only defensible strategy for the humanist in mass culture is to teach his students to hate it."[133]

On the other hand, Weaver enjoyed generally good notices from those who covered the television industry for the nation's newspapers and magazines. His emphasis on special events made TV columnists feel more like their colleagues who covered the theater. Although some turned a jeweler's eye to his frequently uttered intentions for television, others were impressed and saw in some NBC programming initiatives hope for the newest medium. In an admiring photographic tribute to Weaver, *Life* observed, "On those rare occasions when television programs seem to be almost as marvelous as the technical marvel of television, they have a way—currently at least—of turning up most often on the TV channels of the National Broadcasting Company."[134] If nothing else, Weaver enlivened the television beat. Wrote the TV critic Robert Lewis Shayon, "The trade has hardly been dull with Mr. Spectacular around."[135]

Even Weaver's admirers, however, could be unreliable. Spectaculars, by definition, lacked the product predictability of a TV series or variety show, though producers favored adaptations of established, usually middlebrow properties. Despite substantial budgets and talented producers, some of the spectaculars were panned by critics. This was partly an expectations problem. Weaver and NBC's public relations specialists had spent much of 1954 promoting the first spectacular, *Satins and Spurs*. When the special failed to match its advance billing and the cultural promises Weaver repeatedly made, some critics turned on the NBC executive. Some of the subsequent spectaculars similarly disappointed TV columnists. Indeed, an admiring Gould admitted, "Some laid atrocious eggs."[136]

More troublesome were the audience ratings for the spectaculars. Some of the first round of specials did not command the hoped for au-

diences. "Too many have indifferent average audience ratings," *Advertising Age*'s broadcast columnist observed after the first year of Weaver's great experiment. NBC's 1954–55 Saturday spectaculars, despite weak competition, averaged 24.2 Trendex ratings.[137] "There's no denying that the whole intent of the big-big-big shows was to deliver spectacular ratings that would literally blot out the competition," *Variety*'s Rosen wrote. "Up to now they haven't even begun to achieve this potential."[138]

Yet there were successes. None more so than the March 1955 telecast of a Broadway musical version of Sir James Barrie's *Peter Pan*. It marked the first time, Weaver noted, that a current Broadway production had been telecast. Critics hailed the special. "TV gave viewers a seat that was better than any [you] could buy in a theater for money," wrote Hal Humphrey of the *Los Angeles Mirror-News*.[139] NBC took no chances with this production. As had become the network's practice with spectaculars, it heavily cross-promoted the telecast on other network shows and engaged in other activities to generate a large audience for the performance. Press releases snowed on the desks of the nation's TV columnists. *Peter Pan*, an NBC producer remembered, "got more newspaper attention than the invasion of Poland." These efforts paid off handsomely. *Peter Pan* earned a 66.1 percent rating, and 68.13 audience share. NBC analysts estimated some 65 million Americans viewed *Peter Pan*. The spectacular not only overwhelmed CBS's extremely popular *I Love Lucy* in the ratings, it commanded the largest audience ever for a network program.[140]

Moreover, John Crosby observed, *Peter Pan* had the impact Weaver coveted in television programming. When Crosby's children watched a second production of the program in 1956, he was struck by their attentiveness. "To get them to sit still for two hours for anything is terribly difficult," he wrote. "But the important thing is the *degree* of attention a child will pay to 'Peter Pan' as opposed to say, Hopalong Cassidy or anything else he's only mildly interested in. Children anticipated this production for weeks and will remember it until—well, the next time."[141]

For a moment, Weaver appeared to have rewritten the playbook. Nine of the top ten programs, the network claimed in March 1955, were NBC spectaculars. Weaver, Shayon declared, "set the pace and he forced the competition to follow his leadership."[142] Hedging its bets, CBS had boosted its special programming, though on a more modest scale. "The historic pattern of broadcasting is now all but junked," Jack

Gould cheered. "Television has dipped its toes in the show business; now it is taking the big plunge. The practical consequences for the audience in the long run will be improved shows and more of them."[143] And this was just the beginning, one of Weaver's senior assistants, Richard A. R. Pinkham, declared. Perhaps by 1960, "NBC would have a program schedule which is not predictable on a week-to-week basis." Different Broadway producers might be assigned different nights to produce spectaculars.[144]

Decline and Fall

In September 1956, Weaver quit NBC. His hand had been forced by RCA chairman David Sarnoff. The general had begun firing NBC executives whom Weaver had personally recruited. In other ways, Weaver concluded, the general was undermining him. "I wasn't going to be allowed to do it my way," he later remarked. The general named his older son, Robert W. Sarnoff, Weaver's successor.[145] The public explanation for Weaver's departure involved budgetary concerns. Ever tightfisted about broadcasting expenditures, the elder Sarnoff had been reportedly dismayed by an independent audit of NBC by the management consultant firm Booz, Allen, and Hamilton. Weaver, under terms of his separation agreement, said virtually nothing about his resignation; he would later, very privately, protest that he had been a careful manager. Any spending excesses at the network had occurred outside of his control.[146]

Much of the network's expenses in 1954 and 1955 related to inaugurating color telecasts. NBC had invested in new facilities and equipment, including a $3.7 million color studio in Burbank, California. The new site, together with ones in New York, would be used to mount spectaculars and other costly color programming, all to foster a demand for RCA color TVs. Color specials, Weaver remarked while dedicating the Burbank facility in 1955, will cause people "to go out and buy color sets before they buy anything else."[147]

The general might well have ignored Weaver's spending habits and some of the network's problems had NBC's color programming fostered a color television boom. Consumers, however, resisted. Most were put off by the higher costs and reported reception problems. There were, in fact, indications of a consumer backlash to RCA's color campaign. When Los Angeles TV columnist Hal Humphrey praised a color telecast in March 1955, an angry viewer wrote, "you no doubt have a color set, and if you do, I'll bet you didn't put out $900 for it." After discov-

ering "the high price tag on a color set," Humphrey himself had concluded, viewers decided "the spectaculars looked good enough in black and white."[148] RCA had expected 10.2 million color televisions to have been sold by 1958; in reality, only 325,000 had been purchased by that year.[149]

The color TV bust proved especially ill timed for RCA. Given its head start in TV technology and distribution, RCA should have been dominating its field much as General Motors and U.S. Steel did theirs. But the electronics industry, *Fortune* magazine observed in August 1957, was proving more volatile, even for RCA, which was the country's fifth largest manufacturing concern. General Electric had been increasing its share of the market at RCA's expense. RCA's leadership in TV set sales and profits had come early in the television age. A takeoff in color TV sales would have restored some of RCA's luster. Instead, Sarnoff's $100 million investment in color TV receivers and cameras, more than twice what the company had spent on television research, had yet to return a profit. Although Sarnoff's own position was secure, RCA was under intense pressure to control costs.[150]

Sarnoff's real reasons for forcing Weaver's ouster may have been much more personal. The general himself never elaborated on his actions. It is quite possible, as one Weaver aide insisted later, that he simply wanted to promote his son.[151] Robert W. Sarnoff was not party to the coup. He had worked closely with Weaver for years and remained loyal to the end.

A more likely factor was ego—both the general's and Weaver's. Sarnoff resented the attention Weaver received, especially the *New Yorker* profile. Sarnoff believed *he*, not Weaver, warranted such a distinction. And the general was a difficult man to work for. He expected deference—perhaps all the more from his opposites. Sarnoff was a Russian Jewish émigré who had never finished high school, dealing with a well-educated, fast-talking WASP. Weaver was not always careful in his exchanges with the general—did Weaver show off just how much he knew too often? The wounds could have been incalculable. Yet deference had never been in Weaver's repertoire. Indeed, he had succeeded at American Tobacco by challenging chief executive officer George Washington Hill (very much like the general in fostering toadying), arriving late for meetings and plopping his feet on the office table. While working for Hill, Weaver had criticized a Sarnoff friend, the advertising agent Albert Lasker, who never forgot the exchange. Hill, unlike Lasker or Sar-

noff, was wise enough to appreciate Weaver's genius, if not his cheekiness. Although Weaver was entering middle age in the mid–1950s, he was still the brash young man, brimming with self-confidence. As Peter Pan sang, "I'm just the cleverest fellow 'twas ever my fortune to know." Sarnoff was Captain Hook. He could never be deferred to enough, flattered enough. In Weaver's memoir, written almost forty years later, he admitted he might have handled his relations with the general better. Named NBC chairman in 1955, he arrived at a board meeting to find Sarnoff sitting in the chairman's chair. He insisted that the general surrender his seat. A wiser man would have said nothing, and looked for another chair.[152]

Beyond the personal, Weaver had to go. Put differently, the general fired Weaver for the wrong reasons. Weaver may have been a managerial spendthrift. His real weakness, however, was more industry specific. NBC had lost its ratings and revenue leadership to CBS in 1953 and was falling further and further behind Columbia by mid–1956.[153]

Although NBC's revenues rose steadily during Weaver's regime, CBS's increased even more. Columbia passed NBC in 1953 and gradually widened its lead in 1954 and 1955. CBS's 1955 pretax profits rose 29 percent from 1954. Although NBC's pretax profits increased by a lusty 75 percent, they still ranked below Columbia's. NBC that year had greater expenses than CBS ($109 to $101 million). The news only grew worse in 1956. That year, Columbia's share of the three-network revenue was 45.8 percent, to NBC's 38.4 percent. Five years earlier, NBC had led 46.2 percent to 33.2 percent. Indeed, during the first six months of 1950, NBC held 53.4 percent of the total billings. Columbia's performance was all the more impressive given that CBS did not yet have a fifth owned and operated station.[154]

Columbia's lead in audience ratings continued to grow in 1956. That year, Columbia led NBC in nighttime audiences (6:00–11:00 p.m., ET) by 21 percent. During that period, CBS had a higher share of the average viewing hours (46%) than NBC (36%) or ABC (18%). "The competitive rating position of the NBC Television Network versus CBS is still in a most unsatisfactory state," reported NBC's director of research in May 1956. Columbia's larger audiences made it the more efficient advertising vehicle. Most sponsors justified their advertising budgets by dividing the time charges by the number of likely viewers, or cost per thousand. CBS's cost per thousand was $3.28 in 1956, compared to $4.22 for NBC. This gap increased in the last months of 1956.[155]

Weaver had neglected his fundamental responsibility, developing and maintaining an inventory of popular prime-time programs. During the 1950–51 season, fifteen of the top twenty-five prime-time programs were on NBC. The last season for which Weaver bore primary responsibility, 1956–57, NBC could only place five; nine of the top ten programs were on Columbia to one for NBC.[156] The survivors were two programs, *Dragnet* and *You Bet Your Life*, that were not Weaver creations, and variety programs hosted by the singers Perry Como and Tennessee Ernie Ford, as well as the comedian George Gobel. Weaver's earliest successes, including the comic variety hours and *Your Show of Shows*, had left the air. He had failed to nurture series like *Mr. Peepers* and *Medic* that might have had longer runs. Columbia, in contrast, had assembled an impressive mix of situation comedies and dramas. These included three variety programs, three quiz shows, and five situation comedies, *I Love Lucy*, *December Bride*, *The Jack Benny Show*, *The Phil Silvers Show*, and *Private Secretary*.

Needless to say, the situation comedies' resilience had not been anticipated at NBC. "The situation comedy is a limited field within a limited field," Weaver had written early in 1953. "While we should all try for the dozen hits, it will be a sorry day for television if we end up [with] a 100 versions of Life in America in Its Comedy Aspects."[157] A senior Weaver assistant, in November 1955, had assured NBC's affiliated stations that "the situation comedy seems to be slipping as a program form."[158]

All in all, CBS's series more than survived the challenge of the spectacular. Although individual specials drew more viewers than a CBS hit like *I Love Lucy* or Ed Sullivan's *Toast of the Town*, more often the Columbia programs held their own. As a *New Republic* critic noted late in 1955, "The 60 and 90 minute shows did not destroy the opposing 30 minute shows; on the contrary, the shorter programs destroyed the stability of the more lavish productions."[159]

Weaver's scheduling of the spectaculars compounded the problem. He insisted on airing three different spectaculars on different nights each month. Some affiliates pleaded with him to honor the habit principle by designating one night, rather than three, for the specials. Weaver contended that doing so would limit their ability to boost audiences for other NBC programs on different nights.[160] The opposite appears to have been the case. Not being aired every week may have lessened the ratings for *Medic*, a well-regarded medical drama competing against *I*

Love Lucy.[161] "The strong and undeniable influence of habit in television-watching may explain some of the problem that the spectaculars have experienced," Jack Gould remarked. "Frankly, it has been very confusing to know when the spectaculars were to be presented."[162] The spectaculars, two advertising agents concluded, "have not established a regular viewing habit."[163]

Another problem was Weaver's preference for live spectaculars, which caused them to be telecast in the early evening on the West Coast. The spectaculars, a Van Nuys, California, mother complained, "are always shown on a Saturday, Sunday or Monday at a time when we are preparing and eating dinner, feeding and putting the children to bed or doing dishes."[164] The most striking instance came when NBC telecast the Broadway production of the musical *Peter Pan.* "We were given another insight into TV's tremendous potential," a Los Angeles TV editor remarked. Alas, it was an insight that the Los Angeles station had to air at 4:30 Monday afternoon.[165]

NBC's own research confirmed the West Coast problem. Affiliates in Sacramento and Bakersfield refused to clear the first set of Saturday spectaculars. In other Pacific time zone markets, the ratings were all over the map. Liebman's January 1955 production of *Naughty Marietta* earned an impressive 56.2 percent share in San Francisco and 47.1 percent share in Seattle-Tacoma. But Los Angeles proved a tougher sell. *Marietta* held a relatively modest 31.9 to 26.1 percent lead over the second-ranked channel, the independent station KTTV, which aired three filmed programs for children, *Ramar*, *Cisco Kid*, and *Superman.*[166]

In truth, NBC had no choice but to air the spectaculars live. Color telecasts could not be kinescoped clearly, which meant those who lacked the cable connection or refused to clear the time were unable to offer the spectaculars at another time.[167] Videotape might have helped, allowing a time shifting of the spectacular. But the technology was just becoming available, though without good editing hardware, when Weaver departed. For similar reasons, NBC affiliates in the Pacific time zone could not air *The Tonight Show.*[168]

CBS's success discredited Weaver's preference for live originations. Twelve of CBS's eighteen most popular series were normally filmed.[169] Clearly, audiences' acceptance of film series was greater than Weaver and others had realized. Research the network had itself commissioned indicated that just over half of those surveyed did not care if a dramatic program was filmed or live.[170] Weaver similarly misread the fu-

ture when some CBS hits, notably *I Love Lucy* and *The Jack Benny Show*, failed to grow stale after several years, or at least not enough to suffer declining ratings. Finally, the popularity of CBS's filmed series, as well as ones telecast by ABC beginning in 1954 and 1955, did not encourage Weaver's dreaded celluloid network, though rumors persisted that one or more might be launched. Affiliates had proven loyal to their networks.

Part of CBS's triumph can be attributed to NBC's continued scheduling of dramatic anthologies. (CBS had fewer anthologies and scheduled them more skillfully.) NBC dedicated five prime-time hours to six different anthologies. Five of them, whether tired or too highbrow or both, could not compete with CBS's alternatives. CBS's *G.E. Theater* and *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* prospered at the expense of *Goodyear TV Playhouse*, which alternated with *The Alcoa Hour*; both of which left the air in 1957.[171] CBS's *December Bride* was a middling sitcom but benefited from being slated against *Robert Montgomery Presents.* Grey Advertising, the agency for Mennen, which sponsored the Montgomery program, expressed dismay. "We are, at Grey, terribly concerned about the precipitous decline in *Montgomery* ratings," an agent wrote NBC. The ratings for the first two weeks of 1957 were "simply frightful and frightening as well. This *must* be improved."[172] *The Red Skelton Show* and *The $64,000 Question* overwhelmed *The Armstrong Circle Theatre / Kaiser Aluminum Hour*; even though the latter, one NBC publicist remarked, "has been one of the most heavily promoted dramatic hours on the network."[173]

Changes in the television market hurried the decline of NBC's dramatic anthologies. In the seven years Weaver oversaw NBC Television, TV entered more and more Americans homes. Television stations commenced operations in smaller cities and towns, notably in the South and the Plains states. They were less receptive to the original dramas, preferring instead weekly series. "Suddenly, the market expanded enormously," a director of anthology dramas recalled bitterly, "to include an audience that in many ways did not understand drama. What they understood was action and reaction."[174]

Show business precedent suggested that original dramas from New York might not attract the viewer much removed from Manhattan. As Jack Poggi argued in *Theater in America* (1968), the small-town road show had been in decline since the 1910s. Dramatic plays toured only in the largest cities where once, early in the century, they might play

in "opera houses" in some of the smallest communities. Consumers in less populated areas had come to prefer the movies, which had lower admission charges. Attending a theatrical performance, except perhaps a child's high school play, became a rare occurrence for more and more Americans. And, as potential revenues to be accrued on the road fell, producers increasingly attended to the interests of those living in metropolitan New York. "The chief social effect of the decline of the road [show]," Poggi concluded, "was a narrowing of the audience to which a producer directed his work."[175]

Film history provides another valuable analogy. When the studios began producing sound films in the late 1920s, they understandably rushed to New York for help. Gotham's writers and performers, Hollywood assumed, could deal with words as well as images. But the studios soon discovered that Broadway only appealed to one segment of the national audience. Theater owners in smaller communities, which were the last to convert to sound, reported much dissatisfaction with the fast-talking New York–flavored product.[176]

All in all, NBC suffered from a New York backlash. The newer television viewer was decidedly less enthusiastic about a heavy New York accent. Among the first casualties had been Mr. Television. With his ratings slipping, Berle had agreed beginning in the fall of 1952 to tone down his act. He discarded much of the broad comedy; Berle himself became the target instead. "I'm not throwing pies this year," he remarked on one telecast. "I'm only throwing straight lines." But sketches frequently alluded to New York and even Jewish culture. "I'm Don Jose from Far Rockaway," he boasted in one scene. For too much of the new audience, it was too New York, too big city, too culturally pluralist. NBC dropped the program at the end of the 1955–56 season.[177] Weaver's clever alternative, *Your Show of Show*s, had been in the Nielsen top ten during its first two seasons, only to fall to nineteenth during the 1952–53 season and drop out of the top twenty-five the following year. Caesar developed a new variety program, *Caesar's Hour*, that could not match his earlier success. "The graph of his Trendex [ratings]," wrote Stanley Frank in the *Saturday Evening Post*, "was a series of descending steps; his lowest rating each year was his high the following season." His program remained too clever, too esoteric for the new audience. Nor did Caesar deny a metropolitan orientation. A regular sketch involved an obviously New York suburban couple, "the Commuters." The new television audience preferred ABC's low-budget, folksy musical hour,

The Lawrence Welk Show, which, together with Caesar's growing addiction to drugs and alcohol, finished off his program in 1957.[178]

Weaver's daytime scheduling failures were another factor behind his forced departure. Because of its ordinarily low costs, daytime programming could be the most profitable part of the schedule. Although Columbia could not create an effective competitor to *The Today Show*, CBS otherwise bested NBC during the day. Columbia had more popular and more sponsored hours than NBC. Indeed, a May 1956 analysis of network billings by an NBC executive argued that only an increase in daytime sales could overcome CBS's overall leadership. Again, Weaver was guilty, however unintentionally, of overattending to a minority of middle- and upper-class women, at the expense of the whole. *Matinee Theatre* had some early success drawing viewers; its ratings actually peaked the summer after Weaver's departure. But parts of the show remained unsold and early in 1958 *Matinee*'s ratings dropped sharply.[179] CBS's far less culturally ambitious mix of inexpensive soap operas and talk programs, many transferred from radio, easily outdistanced NBC's offerings.[180]

NBC's great daytime triumph in 1956 was not *Matinee Theatre* or *Home*, but an audience giveaway program, *Queen for a Day.* Three different women appeared each day with a story of woe. Based on the applause of the studio audience, one would win a host of consumer goods and be crowned queen. It was immensely popular. An excited *Look* writer declared, "Mops are dropped and diapers ditched from coast to coast every day at 4:00 p.m. when NBC-TV presents *Queen for a Day.*" Not surprisingly, Weaver had nothing to do with the program. Yet despite the absence of the advance publicity invested in *Matinee Theatre*, *Queen* was so popular that, an aide wrote Weaver, "nobody would discuss Matinee." Unlike *Matinee*, all advertising for *Queen for a Day* was sold out.[181]

The Long Exile

Weaver looked for work. Tellingly, and much to his surprise, neither ABC nor CBS expressed interest; nor would a production company hire him. Weaver was not a little hurt. "When I gave the General the heave-ho," he later wrote a friend, "it never occurred to me that I would find myself out of the business." He tried to operate independently by forming Program Service, a film network. Program Service would follow Weaver's NBC strategy, offering alternative programs intended to win

viewers disaffected by a relentless diet of Westerns and situation comedies. But Weaver, operating in a tightening advertising market, had to abandon his scheme, and returned to advertising and consulting.[182]

After several months, General Sarnoff hired Robert Kintner, former president of ABC, to assume Weaver's duties as NBC's chief programmer. Kintner labored to placate NBC's affiliates, uneasy about the network's decline. In his first meeting, Kintner assured members of the NBC affiliates executive committee that he would concentrate his energies on regular programming. "The policy," the committee secretary reported, "is to build a regular daily schedule of wide popular appeal and greatest strength against the competition." NBC would continue to present specials, but less frequently. Nor would certain hours be designated for specials every month. Doing so prevented regular shows from developing audiences.[183] And, the secretary later observed, "in order to succeed in competition and sales, [NBC] had to provide a basic schedule of programs that would have the widest popular appeal and would develop the maximum circulation which the major advertisers seek when they use the network medium."[184]

Although Kintner brought order to NBC's operations, another thirty years passed before the network regained the ratings leadership. Indeed, NBC under Kintner might have slipped into third place had ABC possessed a stronger chain of affiliates. ABC launched a wave of successful Westerns and detective dramas in the late 1950s. (Weaver helped to develop one of ABC's most popular and critically admired Westerns, *Maverick*.)[185] During Kintner's first year as president, the number of NBC programs in the Nielsen top twenty-five did rise to eight, then dropped to six in 1958–59, three in 1959–60, and four in 1960–61.[186] In the early 1960s, NBC prospered without scoring many ratings successes. Rivals dubbed it "the no-hit network." Not until the 1987–88 season did NBC place so many—fourteen—programs in the top twenty-five as it had during the first years of Weaver's NBC tenure. For many years, two of NBC's most consistently profitable properties were Weaver concepts, *Today* and *The Tonight Show*.[187]

6 Paley's Choice

If it isn't a regular show, it's not television.
Frank Stanton, 1956

I think every CBS executive ought to be condemned for a week to looking at their shows.
John Crosby, 1955

When William S. Paley, the owner of CBS, returned to New York after serving in Europe during World War II, his second in command, Paul Kesten, recommended a major policy change for the radio network. Despite some individual successes, Columbia continued to lag behind NBC in program ratings and advertising billings. CBS, Kesten suggested, should in effect accept second place. It would still be very profitable. Instead of competing with NBC for the great audience, Columbia would cultivate the well-to-do and educated listeners. CBS would emphasize "quality" programming, organized around the network's well-regarded news division and dramatic workshops.

The chairman had already made up his mind. Although he had a cold, passive demeanor and often appeared disengaged from the day-to-day details of management, Paley was an intensely competitive man. He hated losing at billiards to his brother-in-law, John Hay Whitney (and accused him of taking lessons). Nor would he settle for second place in radio. Paley rejected Kesten's counsel. While still in Europe, he had drafted a long letter outlining his plan to make Columbia the most popular and profitable radio network. Kesten resigned soon after.[1]

By the late 1940s, Columbia claimed eight of the ten most popular evening radio programs, and fourteen of the top twenty. Paley's raid

on top NBC talent partly, though not entirely, accounted for the turnabout. "CBS made an 18 month jump from practically third to first place," Weaver remarked in September 1949, "because of the superpriority CBS placed on showmanship, placed there by Mr. Paley who personally concerned himself with that phase of his operation."[2] Declared Kesten's successor, "1949 saw Columbia emerge as the unquestioned leader in network radio."[3]

Paley did not only seek to make Columbia the number one radio network. Like Weaver, if much more discreetly, he also strove to alter his network's relationship with advertisers. When he returned to New York, CBS Radio had only one program in the top ten, *Lux Radio Theatre.* And *Lux* was controlled by the advertiser, Lever Brothers, and its agency, J. Walter Thompson. If Paley failed to meet the sponsor's demands—large or small—a program could be lost to NBC. Or the sponsor might move the property simply because NBC had a stronger chain of affiliates. As Weaver himself later noted, the raids on NBC should be understood as an attempt to control talent under contract with individual advertisers. The FCC, in a ruling on the Jack Benny deal, judged the move "a step in the direction of returning control of productions to those licensed to operate in the public interest."[4]

Several years before signing Benny and others to Columbia contracts, Paley started to reconfigure the structure of network radio. To check the advertiser's power, CBS began developing its own entertainment series, including *Life with Luigi*, *Our Miss Brooks*, *Gunsmoke*, and *My Favorite Husband.* "At CBS," Paley recalled, "we made up our minds to take another road—to assume a direct role in programming, to create programs, to enlist talent, to plan the use of our air time." In 1947, fifteen CBS programs were exclusive network productions; sponsors paid production and time costs. Columbia aired an additional twenty-one shows on a sustaining basis, hoping underwriters could be found. Several proved to be successful, notably *Our Miss Brooks* and one featuring the Washington, D.C., radio personality Arthur Godfrey.[5]

"The Inescapable Mandate"

Paley showed none of the same managerial decisiveness concerning television. Indeed, the CBS chairman was decidedly ambivalent about the newest medium. When Weaver met with him in the late 1940s to discuss TV, "Paley still seemed only minimally aware of television."[6]

Like many in show business, he was far from certain that the long-

awaited television boom would in fact occur. There was an element of denial in Paley's attitude toward TV. Radio was his passion. He had great difficulty concentrating on television. Part of the distraction was financial. Unlike RCA, with its large manufacturing operations, Columbia earned virtually all its revenues from radio. Any investment in television would have to be carefully calibrated, because, as Paley and others realized, TV's growth would very likely come at the expense of radio. If Columbia poured too much of its radio profits into television too early, it would lose money.[7]

CBS's inability to impose its color television system immediately after the war further discouraged Paley. Kesten and others had persuaded him to invest in a color television process. If accepted by the FCC, the CBS color system would have frustrated rival RCA's attempt to corner the market on black-and-white television receivers and transmission equipment. It was a huge gamble. Because the CBS system would use UHF channels, Columbia had refrained from applying for all the VHF licenses that the FCC permitted each network to own. (In the mid–1940s, big-market licenses were there for the taking.) CBS wished to demonstrate to potential affiliates and others its commitment to the Columbia color system. When the commission rejected the CBS system, however, Paley faced the prospect of having to play by RCA's rules, and without the same number of O&O stations as NBC. CBS had only two VHF licenses, in New York and Los Angeles. By then, big-city licenses had either been awarded or were only available after a protracted commission review of competing applicants. Without five owned and operated stations, CBS would be competing against NBC at a distinct disadvantage. It briefly tried to minimize its initial operating losses by coinvesting with local newspapers in stations in Minneapolis and Washington, D.C. A network executive discreetly approached the Pulitzer family about purchasing all or part of its St. Louis station. CBS then spent the better part of a decade and many millions of dollars securing three VHF licenses. It unsuccessfully tried to secure a Boston outlet by eliminating the University of New Hampshire's VHF educational reservation. In 1951, Paley approached ABC about a merger; despite being cash poor, ABC had the requisite number of owned and operated stations.[8]

Pressed by senior executives, Paley reluctantly committed CBS to television. Columbia had been telecasting intermittently during the war and afterward from its New York station, but its initial programming ventures were halfhearted. Columbia was pouring far more money into

contracts for NBC radio stars. But the public's interest in the televising of the 1947 World Series (one aide later called the sports telecast "the inescapable mandate") forced Paley's hand. CBS would begin investing seriously in television.[9]

Columbia entered television with relatively little capital. Loans had to be secured to meet some expenses and the network's dividend fell. With NBC drawing the most advertising, CBS had to cover more of its initial programming expenses. *Fortune* magazine in mid–1951 estimated that Paley's network produced between 70 and 75 percent of its programs compared to about half of all NBC shows. CBS's higher ratio would appear to fit Paley's long-term goal of checking the power of the sponsor. But Paley in the early going would have preferred to spread the risks.[10] Meanwhile, his network had to compete with NBC without the latter's financial resources. CBS, *Fortune* reported, "worked hard to build a 'creative organization' that would substitute cleverness and imagination for dollars." *Variety*'s fall 1950 listing of total program costs per week indicated that NBC telecast seven of the most expensive shows to CBS's two.[11]

Although television represented an enormous challenge to his network, Paley proved to be a fitful manager. He was frequently away from the office, causing most decisions to be made by Kesten's successor, Frank Stanton, and others. As president of CBS Inc., Stanton generally limited his involvement in programming decisions, attending more to the public aspects of administration—affiliate relations, government lobbying—that Paley detested. Others handled individual program development, though not CBS Television president J. L. Van Volkenburg. Harry Ackerman, of CBS's West Coast operations, played a more important early role; he initiated negotiations with Lucille Ball to produce *I Love Lucy.* Hubbell Robinson Jr. became vice president in charge of network programming in 1951. Like Weaver, Robinson had worked in advertising, and he came as close as anyone to approaching his NBC counterpart in his responsibility for what Columbia telecast in the 1950s. That said, Paley approved virtually all large and many minor commitments of company resources, and reviewed all series pilots. When he bothered to come to work, his engagement in scheduling and plot development could be significant. But he claimed far too much credit for the achievements of others.[12]

Although CBS had some early successes, NBC had more. *Howdy*

Doody and *The Texaco Star Theater* helped to awaken a long-dormant consumer interest in television in 1948 and 1949. In mid–1950, NBC had sold 25 hours and 15 minutes of network airtime to advertisers, compared to 14 hours, 45 minutes by CBS.[13] Pat Weaver's management of the 1950–51 prime-time schedule, aided by some shows that predated his advent, appeared masterful. According to the A. C. Nielsen service, NBC claimed seven of the ten most popular programs, to two on CBS and one on ABC.

"He Would Pay Money for a Sure Thing"

Despite NBC's early lead in the ratings, Columbia's position was not desperate. It had radio affiliates eager to continue their association with CBS in television. Some did have misgivings about Paley's judgment: his lack of enthusiasm for television, compared to the carnival barker Sarnoff, and his commitment to an unsuccessful color scheme had fostered serious doubts about CBS Television.[14] Nevertheless, the FCC had assigned enough licenses in individual markets to provide CBS with an array of affiliates comparable to NBC's. (The same could not be said for ABC or Du Mont.) The commission all but provided for a duopolistic network structure. "The facilities available on the CBS network and the NBC network," observed two ad agents late in 1956, "are fairly comparable in terms of signal, coverage, etc."[15]

In taking on NBC, Columbia honored the more traditional strategy. Paley and his circle emphasized performers and programs established on the radio. As for taking chances, CBS preferred to have NBC jump first. If a Weaver gamble, like *The Today Show*, proved successful, Columbia followed, ever so cautiously. And like its main rival, CBS tried to contain the authority of sponsors. Otherwise, Columbia followed the well-worn path and honored the rules of radio. Michael Dann, who worked for both Paley and Weaver, later observed, "Paley's basic approach to broadcasting, being a smart professional in the conventional sense, was not to take gambles. Experimentation and development. He didn't understand that. . . . He would pay money for a sure thing."[16]

CBS relied greatly on the transfer principle. That is, the network hoped successful radio shows could be transformed into popular television programs. Ford Motor Company agreed to sponsor a dramatic anthology, *Ford Theater*, originally on CBS Radio. *Lux Radio Theatre* became *Lux Video Theatre*. *Big Town*, a dramatic series about a newspaper,

ran for four seasons. Two giveaway programs, *Beat the Clock* and *Strike It Rich*, made similarly successful transitions to evening prime time. CBS's first popular TV Western, *Gunsmoke*, had been a radio production.

But the transfer principle did not always work. In that regard, Paley's raids had less impact on CBS Television than some had expected. (Paley himself did not have television in mind when he conducted his offensive.) Both *The Jack Benny Show* and *Burns and Allen* had long runs on television, though Benny never duplicated his extraordinary radio popularity. Then, too, because of the greater demands of TV performance, the stars of neither would at first agree to appear every week. Benny only did four shows during the 1950–51 season and six the following year. "It's Benny's theory," observed a *TV World* reporter, "that the weekly TV show puts too much strain on both cast and audience, with the cast eventually getting tired of the show and the audience eventually getting tired of the cast."[17] Paley had great hopes for a video version of another NBC convert, *Amos 'n' Andy*. Despite protests from some civil rights organizations, which accused the producers of stereotyping the series' black protagonists, *Amos 'n' Andy* had strong ratings its first season. But its popularity slipped in 1952–53 and the program lost its sponsor.[18]

Columbia had far better luck scouting less expensive talent that proved compelling on the home screen. CBS Television's most popular performer in the early 1950s was the radio personality Arthur Godfrey. Godfrey had been a successful Washington, D.C., radio performer whom Frank Stanton had brought to New York to host CBS programs. Godfrey spent most of his broadcast career saying whatever was on his mind—and how he truly felt. Covering the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt in April 1945, he forgot to be a newsman and began weeping. He criticized sponsors. "Mr. Godfrey's approach to his commercials," the *New Yorker*'s Philip Hamburger observed, "is compounded largely of bile, sarcasm, and disdain." On one program, Godfrey placed a pack of Chesterfield cigarettes to his nose. "From the horrendous expression that instantly crosses his face," Hamburger observed, "one would think that he had stumbled onto a colony of skunks on a hot summer night."[19]

Many viewers found Godfrey's unaffected style endearing. Even a normally jaded John Crosby of the *New York Herald Tribune* deemed Godfrey's television personality "one of the most winning of all time." Indeed, he was more "personality" than performer. "The thing that makes Arthur Godfrey remarkable as a hit entertainer," *Time* observed in 1950, "is his relative lack of definable talent. He can neither sing,

dance, act, nor perform with skill on a musical instrument." Nevertheless, he proved so popular that in addition to his radio shows, he hosted two evening variety programs and a fifteen-minute ukulele instruction show on television. "Arthur Godfrey was on TV and radio so often," a Milwaukee broadcaster recalled, "the only thing a person could turn on in his house without getting Godfrey was the faucet."[20] Although the ukulele program had a limited run, the other two Godfrey shows, *Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts* and *Arthur Godfrey and His Friends*, had high Nielsen ratings. *Talent Scouts* was the more popular, ranking first in the 1951–52 Nielsens, second in 1952–53, and third in 1953–54; *Friends* finished in the top ten those seasons. Godfrey also starred in two of the top-rated 1952–53 programs. "Godfrey dominated the medium," the journalist R. D. Heldenfels wrote, "like no star before or since." In 1950, Godfrey's television and radio programs, according to *Variety*, accounted for one-sixth of the network's total revenues. "NBC is a subsidiary of RCA," Bob Hope quipped, "like CBS is a subsidiary of Arthur Godfrey."[21]

Another early and even more resilient CBS video success did not rely on its radio talent pool. Early in 1948 Paley wanted his network to launch a Sunday evening variety hour, eventually dubbed *Toast of the Town*. The problem, similar to the one besetting NBC's *Texaco Star Theater*, was casting a host. Worthington Miner, who oversaw Columbia's early television productions, persuaded Paley to sign *New York Daily News* show business columnist Ed Sullivan. Although Sullivan had worked in radio in the 1930s and wanted to give TV a try, he was an odd choice. He was not a natural performer. Sullivan himself admitted, "I'm handicapped by no talent at all." But that was part of Miner's design. Unlike Berle's program, *Toast of the Town* stressed the acts and not the host. His awkward posture (worsened after a serious automobile accident in 1956) and diction provided fodder for two generations of comics. Yet they also helped account for his popularity, John Crosby observed. Viewers "can identify themselves with Sullivan where a more overpowering personality might drive them away." Sullivan also possessed a keen eye for emerging stars, even if he could not always remember their names during the show. *Toast*'s premiere included the new comedy team of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. Over time, classical singers shared the billing with comics followed by puppeteers and such animal acts as Suzy the Wonder Dog and Zippy the Monkey.[22]

Behind the scenes, Sullivan, and not the network, initially held *Toast*

of the Town together. (*Toast* had no sponsors its first three months.) Sullivan and an ad agent secured the talent. For the first show, Sullivan had personally persuaded Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II to appear free. Columbia only budgeted the program at $375 a week. Stung by early criticisms of the program, Sullivan paid some of the costs out of his own pocket. In 1951, Robinson recalled, CBS remained tightfisted, awarding Sullivan $750 a week for all talent. The total budget that season came to less than a third of that commanded by NBC's *Four Star Revue* and *Colgate Comedy Hour* and about 40 percent of that for *Texaco Star Theater.* When Sullivan protested that he was losing money doing the show, Paley agreed to double the talent expenses. By then, he could well afford to be generous. With Sullivan having assumed much of the financial risk, *Toast of the Town* was becoming one of CBS's most successful shows. It remained a Sunday night fixture through the 1970–71 season.[23]

A year after the debut of *Toast of the Town*, CBS found another hit, *Mama.* Based on a popular Broadway play and feature film, *Mama* was a half-hour comedy drama about a Norwegian American family living in San Francisco in 1910. Like most successful series, *Mama* was effectively cast and written. Its longtime director, Ralph Nelson, was himself from a Scandinavian American family and understood firsthand the culture of the characters. Telecast live from New York on Fridays, *Mama* was one of CBS's most popular series during the 1950–51, 1951–52, and 1952–53 seasons.[24]

Nonetheless, CBS needed more hits to catch up with NBC. In 1951, NBC accounted for 46.2 percent of the total advertising billings for the four networks, to 33.2 percent for Columbia. ABC and Du Mont did not offer enough programs, nor have enough affiliates, to interest many sponsors. It remained a two-network race.

CBS's best hope was to outduel NBC for promising talent. As Columbia labored to construct its evening schedule, the network targeted Lucille Ball, the star of CBS Radio's *My Favorite Husband.* Ball was one of many motion picture actresses who also did radio work. She kept hoping that more would come of her film career. To Ball's immense disappointment, she failed to secure the roles, including the lead in *Born Yesterday*, that might have made her a star. Hollywood was full of such performers. *My Favorite Husband* had allowed Ball to establish herself as a skilled radio comedienne, and she was prepared to give TV a try. When agent Don Sharpe told Columbia of Ball's availability, CBS

proposed that she appear in a series, like *Mama*, to originate live every other week from New York.[25]

Ball won several large concessions. She insisted that her Cuban-born husband, Desi Arnaz, play her spouse on the series. Although Arnaz was an accomplished bandleader and performer, his casting was problematical. Would audiences accept an Anglo-Hispanic couple, even one that was, in fact, husband and wife? (Robinson was among those who did not want Arnaz in the series.) Ball similarly demanded that Arnaz be included in her CBS Television contract as the costar. The original Columbia agreement only listed Ball. A well-received road tour convinced CBS that viewers might indeed embrace the couple.[26]

Another complication involved the program's origination. Ball and Arnaz preferred to produce their biweekly series from Los Angeles. Doing a show every fortnight in California would allow Ball to pursue her film career and permit Desi to tour with his band. Moreover, they were trying to start a family. Then, too, New York held no appeal for either performer. Ball's memories of living in New York City as a struggling model and actress were very unpleasant.[27] Both insisted on remaining in the West. At the moment, this was no small matter. Even Benny, it should be noted, had agreed to produce his first CBS shows from New York. "I've been in town a week," he said on his first telecast, "and twenty bucks went like that!"[28]

There was another sticking point, that the series be filmed. Columbia had agreed, early in 1951, to the filming of the video version of *Amos 'n' Andy*.[29] But that was an established broadcast franchise—radio's most successful situation comedy—compared to anything Arnaz and Ball fashioned. CBS was not as committed to live telecasts as NBC, and Stanton and Robinson were among those who thought filmed programming would eventually be commonplace. But CBS understood that transcribed shows—or too many of them—challenged the logic of national networks. "It is only a network," Stanton remarked several years later, "which can provide on a nationwide basis the real magic of television—its real vitality—the live program, seen by the nation just *as* it happens and just *when* it happens."[30]

There were two other, more practical, short-term concerns. Filmed programs must not appear cheap; many of the earliest ones, shot with 16-mm film, did. Yet a high quality filmed series greatly added to production costs, roughly twice the expense of kinescopes. *Amos 'n' Andy*'s

relatively steep expenses partly accounted for its short video life. In a daring move, Ball and Arnaz agreed to assume the financial risks; their newly formed production company, Desilu, would produce the series. If the film series could not be produced as scheduled, the program would be telecast live from Los Angeles.[31]

The series formula required some tinkering. The original conception owed something to the formats of *The Jack Benny Show* and *Burns and Allen.* As in those series, Ball and Arnaz were in effect to play themselves, well-to-do show business figures. The pilot episode resembled a thirty-minute variety show of different acts; it was turned down by some six or seven advertisers. Someone, possibly Ball, more probably the advertising executive Milton H. Biow, handling the Philip Morris cigarette account, then persuaded Ball and Arnaz to portray struggling, middle-class versions of themselves with whom viewers would be much more likely to identify. Arnaz was a Cuban bandleader and Ball his stay-at-home wife, residing in a modest Manhattan apartment. Ball enthusiastically accepted the suggestion. In addition, the show would appear every week.[32]

Much of the program was to revolve around Lucy, borrowing from her character on *My Favorite Husband.* She was constantly plotting to escape her domestic confinement and establish her own career. Each attempt was hilariously unrealized. Lucy was "the thwarted schemer," the cultural critic William A. Henry III later wrote, "a figure dating back to the Romans if not the Greeks, but Ball deftly sentimentalized the character, merged its cunning intellect with joyously low physical comedy."[33] And Ball, though usually the comic victim, was an attractive one, which made her appealing to many female viewers. Ball "belongs to a rare comic aristocracy," *Time* observed, "the clown with glamour."[34]

Arnaz; Jess Oppenheimer, who had produced *My Favorite Husband;* and the veteran cinematographer Karl Freund crafted what proved to be the era's most enduring situation comedy. Both Arnaz and Ball had marvelously expressive faces, well suited for the small TV screen. Freund used three cameras and developed special lighting that allowed for the simultaneous shooting of wide shots, medium shots, and close-ups. (The original plan called for four cameras, one of which had to be cut to save on costs.) The three-camera technique was not, as historians of the series contend, an innovation. It had been developed by the TV program producer Jerry Fairbanks three years earlier. It was, as the film historian Thomas Schatz noted, more cost efficient than the standard,

one-camera feature film method; it became the industry standard. The filming took place before an audience; a senior CBS executive had concluded that Ball, like many entertainers, performed better when audiences responded to different bits; Arnaz simply hated the recorded laugh track available.[35]

Premiering October 15, 1951, *Lucy* became the decade's greatest hit. It finished third in the 1951–52 Nielsens, and first in 1952–53, when it earned an average 67.3 rating, higher than Berle's, the ratings leader, two seasons earlier. (Berle himself did a sketch on his November 25, 1952, *Texaco Star Theater*, "I Hate Miltie," in which he played Arnaz and Eva Gabor played Lucy, "A Deso-Late Production.") *Lucy* again placed first in 1953–54 and 1954–55, second in 1955–56, just behind CBS's *$64,000 Question*, and first again during its final season, 1956–57. "*I Love Lucy* is probably the most misleading title imaginable," Jack Gould wrote in 1953. "For once, all available statistics are in agreement: Millions love Lucy."[36]

As was so often the case with success in television, *I Love Lucy* benefited from its place on the schedule, Mondays at nine. The previous season, viewers had favored NBC's *Lights Out*, a suspense anthology. But *Lights Out*'s popularity owed much to Columbia's inability to offer an effective alternative. *Lights Out*, an NBC audience analyst wrote several years later, "was bucking a very weak show on CBS. We were aware that if and when CBS ever changed its programming that *Lights Out* was vulnerable. . . . As soon as CBS programmed *I Love Lucy*, *Lights Out* dropped out of the first ten, out of the first twenty, out of the first eighty in one fell swoop."[37]

Lucy constituted the most powerful demonstration of the habit principle. Every Monday night, people watched *Lucy*. Writers integrated Ball's 1952 pregnancy into scripts. The January 19, 1953, episode in which Little Ricky was born (she actually gave birth the same day) received a 68.8 rating and distracted celebrants in Washington preparing for Dwight Eisenhower's first inauguration; Eisenhower himself numbered among Lucy's fans.[38] Weaver was skeptical about the habit principle, and NBC waited several years before taking on *Lucy*. Spectaculars, Weaver thought, would cut into its audience. Only a few did.

Columbia was also proving to be more flexible with on-air talent. CBS might prefer that *Lucy* originate live from New York, but relented when Arnaz and Ball insisted that they do the show in California. NBC had allowed Groucho Marx to film his program there; its good pro-

duction values and popularity indicated a successful series could be recorded. Nevertheless, it is unlikely Weaver had a hand in the arrangement, or that even he would have stood up to the comedian. Marx, after all, had a considerably longer show business track record than Ball and Arnaz. NBC did in fact enter negotiations when the couple was wrangling with Columbia over their show's production, though it is not clear if Weaver would have accepted all of their terms.[39]

Mindful that most popular performers lived in southern California, CBS constructed a fifteen-acre Television City studio at the corner of Beverly Boulevard and Fairfax Avenue. Yet the network itself was not certain how much TV production would in fact migrate west. "When we began to plan Television City," a CBS spokesperson admitted when the studio prepared to open in October 1952, "we could not predict the directions television would take in the succeeding years. Even today no one knows for certain." Robinson that year predicted that up to half of all production would be in Los Angeles. Yet he denied, a reporter explained, "that New York will become a deserted city so far as TV is concerned, and says he doesn't expect either it or Hollywood to have any clearcut claim to the title of video capital of the nation."[40] Having underestimated West Coast production demands, Columbia had to expand Television City five years later.[41]

Compared to CBS's *Mama* and NBC's *Mr. Peepers*, which were aired live, *I Love Lucy* could be and was rerun on the network and then syndicated to individual stations. Even NBC executives recognized the importance of the secondary run of filmed series as a revenue source; NBC was offering strips of *Dragnet*, *Victory at Sea*, and other series to stations.[42] CBS soon followed. The nonnetwork filmed productions available to stations from smaller Hollywood units were generally considered to compare poorly to the network products. Nevertheless, no one, it appears, realized *how* profitable reruns could be. Columbia essentially surrendered the syndication rights of *I Love Lucy* to Desilu. Arnaz himself assumed reruns of *Lucy* would have a large overseas market; their domestic distribution value was not clear.[43] Then, too, reruns were expected to be aired off prime time, that is, during the day or on weekends. When CBS began telecasting reruns of *Lucy* in April 1955, they were aired at 6:00 p.m. Sunday. CBS had promised to run them earlier, just before the culturally ambitious program *Omnibus*, which aired at 5:00 p.m. and would have benefited from the lead-in. When the network failed to do so, producer Robert Saudek approached NBC about picking up his program.[44]

In the early and mid–1950s, many within the industry had misgivings about reairing a program in evening prime time. "I made known to you my strong feelings against repeats," *Mama* director Ralph Nelson remarked in October 1952. "I can understand repeating a holiday show that was particularly satisfying—like a Thanksgiving or a Christmas show—but I can't understand using repeats *for any other reason.*"[45] *I Love Lucy* followed industry practice in the summer, when the network telecast a replacement show rather than once-aired episodes of the series. The stand-ins included *My Little Margie* (1952), *Racket Squad* (1953), and *Those Whiting Girls* (1955 and 1957). With few exceptions, television's replacement series, the writer Goodman Ace moaned, paled in comparison. He dubbed summer television "The Big Lay Off."[46] Nonetheless, station managers and advertisers worried that rerunning a program carried risks. Viewers, it was assumed, had already seen the original episode and would switch the channel. One ad agency executive suspected that *I Love Lucy*'s strong ratings were partly due to the program not being rerun in the summers.[47]

A growing body of research, however, challenged the rerun rule. Reruns might be a cost-effective option even in evening prime time. Not every potential viewer saw the first run. Many other viewers, who had seen the original episode, watched a rerun, especially of a well-produced show like *Lucy*, rather than defect to another station. Indeed, a summer 1955 J. Walter Thompson study suggested that summer replacement series could cause audience shares to *decline*. "Any use of a summer replacement [program]," wrote a Thompson executive, "may result in a loss of audience."[48] Observed one advertising trade journal, the strong ratings for reruns of *Lucy* late in 1955—the show tied Gleason's *Honeymooners* for tenth place—provided a "potent argument for [the] effectiveness of reruns."[49] Columbia's failure to secure ownership of *Lucy*, Thomas Schatz noted, "cost CBS millions over the next few years and is an apt indication of how little the networks understood the financial stakes and profit potential of TV series production."[50]

While Columbia initially undervalued the filmed series, its emphasis on situation comedies proved pivotal to the network's strategic advantage. Between 1950 and 1956, Columbia scheduled just over twice as many situation comedies during the season as NBC.[51] NBC executives rightly noted that most half-hour comedies failed. But most new series, whether comedies or dramas or variety shows, failed. Thirteen of CBS's twenty-one comedies did not last more than two seasons. But the eight

that did run three or more years helped propel Columbia past NBC. They were "anchor shows," a CBS executive wrote, "which through the years have gathered large, loyal and responsive audiences."[52]

NBC simply did not have the same faith in the situation comedy. Of NBC's nine situation comedies scheduled between the fall 1950 and 1955 seasons, only two, *The Life of Riley* and *Father Knows Best*, ran more than two years. And *Father Knows Best* had originally been telecast on Columbia. CBS by comparison put much time and energy into scheduling situation comedies. Some were former radio shows, including *Life with Luigi*, *My Friend Irma*, and *My Favorite Husband;* they had modest video lives.[53] Far more successful was *Our Miss Brooks*, which featured Eve Arden as Connie Brooks, a sarcastic English teacher at Madison High School. Thanks to *Our Miss Brooks*, two show business reporters claimed, "the American attitude toward the teaching profession is changing for the better."[54]

A successful situation comedy could not only benefit the network directly but generate a positive "audience flow" for programs that followed. That is, it could increase the number of viewers watching the series scheduled after the hit. *December Bride*, a situation comedy about a widowed mother-in-law living with her daughter and her family, was not especially memorable. Even aging baby boomers who watched a lot of television in the 1950s will be hard-pressed to recall the program with the affection that *I Love Lucy* or *The Honeymooners* evokes. Nevertheless, *December Bride* proved to be one of Columbia's more popular series in the mid–1950s, largely because it followed *Lucy* on Monday nights. Writer-producer Parke Levy based the series on his family life. Levy, a Los Angeles critic cracked, "converted his mother-in-law into a cash-bearing annuity called 'December Bride.'"[55]

Weaver understood, as well as anyone in broadcasting, the importance of audience flow, and the damage unpopular programs could inflict on a network's evening schedule. *The Voice of Firestone*, aired Mondays at 8:30, had proved a poor competitor against one of Godfrey's shows. *Firestone*'s small following in effect boosted Godfrey's ratings, which in turn created a positive audience flow for *I Love Lucy*. Weaver referred to *Firestone* as a "circulation block." As CBS crafted more hit series in 1953, 1954, and 1955, he admitted in a memo to General Sarnoff, it boosted the audiences for programs that followed them.[56]

Audience flow was especially powerful in the mid–1950s when viewers had relatively few choices. Even the largest cities had only four or five stations. In smaller areas, one or two stations might be operat-

ing. At the same time, changing channels required some physical effort; remote controls were expensive options few viewers purchased. Very wealthy individuals like John Hay Whitney had his butler change channels for him. Robert R. McCormick, publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*, occasionally had *Tribune* engineers do so. The rest of the country had to get up from the sofa to switch stations. A fall 1956 study by the Nielsen service estimated that between 7:00 and 11:00 p.m. thirty-seven minutes lapsed between channel changes.[57]

Despite the network's steady gains, CBS's judgment was hardly infallible. Although wishing to adapt the radio comedy *December Bride* for the home screen, Columbia surrendered its partial ownership of the potential series when the producer, Arnaz and Ball's Desilu, insisted on casting Spring Byington in the lead. As in the case of *I Love Lucy*, when CBS resisted having Arnaz in the cast, the network's preferences proved costly. General Foods agreed to sponsor the program, with Byington, on Columbia. Paley then frantically sought a stake in the series. CBS received a 25 percent share after agreeing to slate *December Bride* following *I Love Lucy* on Monday evenings.[58]

More often than not, however, CBS showed superior judgment; its operations were strikingly cost efficient. The network preferred to develop shows around performers like Lucille Ball whose failure to achieve stardom in film or radio made them affordable—promising but less expensive talent. Show business was never a meritocracy. Able comics and actors might spend years if not forever waiting for the big break.

Among those waiting was the comedian Phil Silvers, whom Robinson signed to a network contract in 1955. Silvers had begun to have some success on Broadway after a fairly undistinguished career. The writer Nat Hiken and Silvers then developed *You'll Never Get Rich*, which premiered in September 1955. Silvers played Ernie Bilko, the fast-talking, forever conniving master sergeant at Fort Baxter, Kansas. Bilko, John Crosby wrote, "is a cardsharp, promoter and master swindler of the barracks." He called the first episode "a wonderfully inspired bit of lunacy." Telecast at the height of the Cold War, *You'll Never Get Rich* gently satirized the peacetime U.S. Army. Although a few detractors accused the program of undermining military morale, the series' fans included the former commander of American forces in Europe, President Dwight D. Eisenhower. When the president missed an episode, his press secretary phoned the show's production supervisor to ask that a copy be sent to the White House. Thus, Hiken's biographer

wrote, Eisenhower "could keep abreast of Bilko's travesties on army life."[59] *You'll Never Get Rich* helped to displace Berle forever from the top twenty-five Nielsens. Ironically, Silvers had attracted CBS's attention in part because of his starring in a Broadway musical, *Top Banana*, playing a character based on Berle.[60]

As in the case of Ball and Arnaz, CBS had shown flexibility in negotiating with Silvers. Although Columbia wanted Silvers's series to originate in Los Angeles, he insisted on doing the program in New York. "This is my town, man, good old New York!" Columbia relented.[61]

CBS possessed another competitive advantage. The network prided itself on taking care of its best performers. Columbia was normally careful about launching new programs. But once they achieved viewer favor, CBS rewarded their stars handsomely. "That's the kind of store we ran," Robinson recalled. "We had consideration for our talent. It's always been the hallmark of our talent relations."[62]

No CBS player asked for more consideration from his employer than the comedian Jackie Gleason. Gleason had starred in the first, short-lived video version of the situation comedy *Life of Riley* on NBC and the variety hour *Cavalcade of Stars* on Du Mont. Until doing the Du Mont show, Gleason had had a less than middling career. He was earning decidedly modest wages at decidedly modest night clubs. Gleason had been "a carnival barker, night-club emcee, actor, Broadway-revue comic and motion-picture bit player," Steve Allen wrote, "almost twenty years of relative failure." Nonetheless, Gleason's work on *Cavalcade* indicated that he was a performer, like Phil Silvers, with tremendous potential in video. Even more than Ball and Arnaz, he had a marvelously expressive face for the small screen. Gleason's "expressive eyes and mobile face were ideal for television close-ups," his costar Audrey Meadows wrote. Signed to a generous CBS contract in 1951, Gleason hosted a variety show from New York for three seasons beginning the following fall. He starred in numerous comic sketches, all of which—Joe the Bartender, Reggie Van Gleason, the Poor Soul—had been crafted by his writers on *Cavalcade*. The most famous was "The Honeymooners," in which Gleason played the New York City bus driver Ralph Kramden. He modeled Ralph after men he had known in his native borough. "In my part of Brooklyn," he told Meadows, "we had a million Ralph Kramdens." Several years of indifference by NBC toward the 8:00 p.m. Saturday slot helped to make Gleason's show among the most popular on television. It ranked eighth in the Nielsens in 1953–54 and second only to *I Love Lucy*, in 1954–55.[63]

Exhausted, Gleason begged off doing a variety hour in 1955–56. Instead, he starred in a thirty-minute version of "The Honeymooners" sketch recorded on a precursor to videotape. The series had only fair ratings during its first run, though it proved hugely popular in syndication. Gleason returned to hosting a variety hour in the fall of 1956.[64]

CBS's handling of Gleason was revealing. The comic had been anxious to leave Du Mont for the far greener pastures of CBS or NBC. Weaver greatly admired "the Great One's" abilities but he could not persuade his colleagues at NBC or a key sponsor to commit to the comedian. Columbia characteristically proved more agile. Although Gleason's demands were extravagant, Van Volkenburg and Frank Stanton approved a contract. Fearful of losing him to NBC, they acted without Paley's authorization. Paley winced at the costs of the deal. As if to add to the chairman's anxieties, Von Volkenburg and Stanton granted Gleason extraordinary control over the program in the hope that he and the network would strike gold. Unlike Weaver, CBS did not ask him to include cultural vitamins, say, a ten-minute adaptation of Shaw's *Man and Superman*. Columbia "had given him carte blanche to a prime-time network show," Meadows recalled. CBS's "trust in this breezy, brazen Broadway showboat to capture the nation's consciousness based on his invincible confidence and dominance of every area of the show's operation was as startling as it was complete."[65]

At the same time, Columbia took up an NBC objective in underwriting Gleason's program. CBS had agreed to telecast the program for a full season before securing any commitments from advertisers. None was forthcoming until the last minute, when the network sold the program on a participating basis, to three different sponsors. Although containing sponsor sovereignty had been a long-term goal, this was not Columbia management's original intention; it was plainly superior to the alternative.[66] Without Weaver's fanfare, then, CBS found itself taking up the model of *Your Show of Shows*. During the day, CBS similarly followed the magazine plan. Daytime programs starring Godfrey, Garry Moore, and Bob Crosby all had multiple sponsors similar to *Today* and *Home*.[67] CBS, like NBC, was demonstrating its confidence in setting the schedule, over that of an advertiser. The Gleason show was in production *before* sponsors were secured. Similarly, twenty-one episodes of *You'll Never Get Rich* had been filmed before Columbia sold the series to two sponsors.[68]

Silvers's program and others highlighted CBS's enthusiasm for ver-

tical integration. Paley's postwar plan for radio had called for checking advertiser ownership of popular shows. His network would sign and control the talent and, when possible or necessary, produce the program. Columbia did not follow this objective mindlessly. Although Paley shared Weaver's goal of gaining leverage over advertisers, that objective was of secondary importance to his network. If Paley and others saw great potential in a given program or star, notably in the case of *I Love Lucy*, proprietary interest became a secondary consideration. It might even be conceded during negotiations. If a series in which CBS had no stake achieved success, however, Columbia revisited the matter of ownership. Desilu was one of many independent producers that gave up partial autonomy because of CBS's material inducements. In 1957, the FCC's Office of Network Study concluded, CBS owned 38.8 percent of programs aired in evening prime time, more than twice as many as NBC.[69]

Congressional and FCC investigators scrutinized such arrangements. NBC was also signing talent like Bob Hope to long-term commitments, and assuming ownership of some popular programs like *Howdy Doody*.[70] Such deals could be likened to the major film studios' control of production and distribution in the 1930s, which violated the Sherman Antitrust Act. Did CBS and NBC compel producers to sell complete or partial ownership? A pattern of coercion was never proved. Fearing retaliation, some producers were unwilling to complain publicly. Both NBC and CBS occasionally won some concessions, often a percentage of syndication fees, in exchange for scheduling series.[71] Others, like Arnaz, were only too happy to take Columbia's money.[72] Nevertheless, such practices contradicted the classical liberal goal of encouraging competition in communication. Excessive network control of programming upset that ideal. It even carried an aesthetic cost, argued Representative Emanuel Celler of New York, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. Network dominance, he remarked in 1957, "throttles innovation and originality and encourages imitation and sameness in programming today. Bigness fears and minimizes risk and change and originality."[73]

The networks' Washington critics missed the point. CBS and NBC were not trying to stifle creativity so much as each other—and the bossy sponsor. Paley's ostensible objective was to check the power of advertisers. Yet this carried two meanings. Sponsors who owned the series could and frequently did exercise excessive control over produc-

tion, even though legally the network and its affiliates were responsible to the FCC for what was broadcast. As Stanton reminded the Senate Commerce Committee in 1956, the commission itself, in the 1946 Blue Book, had decried this tendency.[74] At the same time, however, Paley and Weaver both understood that advertiser ownership carried another risk. A sponsor could and sometimes did move popular programs to the rival network. This would not occur if the network itself held some stake in the program. Finally, network ownership would forestall any new "raids" of talent by the competition.[75]

"Extravaganzas"

At the end of the 1952–53 season, the high ratings for *I Love Lucy* together with those for Godfrey and other Columbia programs helped CBS edge NBC in ratings and billings. CBS's strategy had been in the main decidedly traditional. That is, CBS based its television programming practices on those developed in radio. None more so than the habit principle: that audiences could be captured if the network crafted entertaining programming, with the same cast and situations, aired every week or, in the case of some programs, every other week. As Stanton argued, "The public knows what's on, looks forward to it, makes plans around it, develops the habit of the time-period. If it isn't a regular show, it's not television."[76]

Ed Sullivan was also demonstrating the power of habit. To combat *Toast of the Town*, Weaver promoted *The Colgate Comedy Hour.* NBC could end Sullivan's run, Weaver believed, by outspending its rival and casting prominent personalities to emcee *The Comedy Hour*. The great weakness of *Toast of the Town* remained the very awkward on-air presence of Sullivan himself (a criticism he stubbornly refused to acknowledge). NBC initially had little difficulty persuading leading entertainers like Bob Hope to host *The Comedy Hour*. Because of other commitments, however, each would only emcee once a month. At first, *The Comedy Hour*'s pitching rotation appeared strong enough, and many industry insiders considered *Toast of the Town*'s days numbered. Indeed, *Advertising Age* recalled, "Most people thought it was just a matter of time until Eddie Cantor, Fred Allen and Martin & Lewis would have 'Smilin' Ed' on the ropes." Although *The Comedy Hour* overcame *Toast of the Town* in the ratings, Columbia refused to panic. Weaver himself admired "the guts of the CBS command" for standing by Sullivan's program. Columbia increased its subsidy of the show and cut ad rates to keep it afloat.

Table 6.1. *Toast of the Town* versus *Colgate Comedy Hour*, Trendex Average Ratings

Season	*Toast*	*Colgate*
1951–52	23.6	31.2
1952–53	25.7	30.9
1953–54	29.7	25.5
1954–55	38.2	15.9

Source: Advertising Age, 21 Nov. 1955, 97.

"They know what they believe and are willing to fight it out," Weaver wrote in a March 1953 memo. By the 1953–54 season, *Toast of the Town* had jumped ahead of *Comedy Hour* in the Trendex average ratings; a season later, Sullivan enjoyed a better than two-to-one lead (see table 6.1). Meanwhile, NBC literally ran out of talented comics willing and able to host *Comedy Hour*. The network even approached Sullivan about switching to NBC. In 1955, CBS signed Sullivan to a new contract and, in recognition of his identity with the program, *Toast of the Town* became *The Ed Sullivan Show*. It finished third in the 1955–56 Nielsens and second a year later.[77]

Columbia's advantage over NBC encompassed more than adherence to the habit principle. CBS achieved greater cost efficiencies. NBC evening series were not only losing in the ratings, but they were 24.2 percent more expensive, according to a September 1953 analysis by Hugh M. Beville Jr., director of NBC research. NBC evening programs averaged a 23.7 rating, 8.5 percent lower than the CBS average. When talent expenses were divided by ratings, NBC programs were 37 percent more costly than Columbia's.[78]

As CBS's gains became clear, Weaver elected to spend even more money by gambling on a very different approach. He chose to deemphasize the weekly series in favor of special programs or spectaculars. Weaver had convinced himself that viewer interest in weekly series was waning. Television risked losing its huge share of the great audience if it did not give greater play to costly specials. At the same time, NBC would telecast the spectaculars in color, to promote RCA's new line of color receivers. Beginning in the fall of 1954, NBC devoted three different evenings a month to spectaculars.

Columbia responded rapidly to Weaver's plans. CBS announced its own special programming for the fall 1954 season, though the network dubbed them "extravaganzas." They were produced in color, just in case the color TV boom did, in fact, transpire. (CBS telecast *Mama*, October 29, 1954, in color.)[79] Otherwise, they were more modest initiatives: two one-hour musical programs, *The Best of Broadway* and *The Shower of Stars.* George Rosen of *Variety* called them "baby specs."[80] Unlike NBC, CBS paid more homage to the habit principle. Each extravaganza appeared every fourth week, on Wednesdays and Thursdays. That practice appears to have been relatively effective. On October 6, 1955, *Shower of Stars* actually overcame NBC's popular *Dragnet* in the Trendex ratings for fourteen cities.[81] *Best of Broadway* had more difficulty, in part because a boxing match filled its Wednesday time slot three weeks a month. Fight enthusiasts did not necessarily share an enthusiasm for George S. Kaufman.[82] Although CBS increased the length of its spectaculars a year later, NBC's main competition was more cautious about scheduling the specials. And unlike Weaver, Columbia welcomed sole sponsorship by auto manufacturers. Chrysler sponsored *Shower of Stars.* A year later, Ford agreed to underwrite *Ford Star Jubilee* once a month on Saturdays. It was the most ambitious mix of musical and dramatic performance. *Ford Star Jubilee* included musical specials and a video version of the Broadway drama *The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial.*[83]

It is worth asking why Columbia even took up Weaver's strategy. CBS was doing very well with regular programming. The spectacular was a risky venture. "The advertising value of the spectaculars has yet to be proved," Jack L. Von Volkenburg remarked. "They aren't going to create a habit and their costs are staggering."[84] Indeed, Weaver's approach, as he himself admitted privately, reflected Columbia's growing advantage in developing popular television series, many of them originally on the radio. NBC had failed to develop sufficiently popular half-hour series, Beville argued in a September 1953 memo.[85] CBS's edge over NBC in the ratings and advertising billings continued to grow after 1953–54. Why adopt a failing rival's tactics?

Columbia's special programming had several sources. If, in fact, the color TV boom took place, CBS had to offer some color telecasts. Then, too, Weaver might be correct about programming trends. An excessive reliance on the weekly series might cost television some viewers. Only more expensive, event programming could maintain large audi-

ences. Gould of the *New York Times* and Crosby of the *New York Herald Tribune* contrasted Weaver's "grand design" with CBS's conservative approach. CBS, Gould wrote, "was making money like mad yet its rival was causing all the talk." A less generous Crosby drew a sharper contrast. Crosby bemoaned Columbia's "doing radio shows poorly fashioned in the image of TV." "Mediocrity has become the hallmark at CBS," he wrote. "I think every CBS executive ought to be condemned for a week to looking at their own shows."[86]

This was a moment in broadcast history when such barbs could affect industry behavior. Hubbell Robinson admitted as much when he observed, in a January 1955 essay, that "today's critics, particularly those holding chairs on the better New York papers, are responsible, penetrating, properly contemptuous of the second-rate and heartenningly indulgent of the innovator. Their praise is worthy."[87] Columbia had always been self-conscious about its image. Some concession to the cultural monitors should be made and, given CBS's robust fiscal health, could be made. *Ford Star Jubilee* constituted, one advertising executive argued, "Paley's bid to get back in big show business."[88]

But CBS's extravaganzas had an uneven track record. Critics admired individual productions, notably *The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial.* Gould considered it superior to the Broadway version.[89] But viewers could be more fickle. Although *Caine Mutiny* and several musical programs featuring Judy Garland and Eddie Fisher enjoyed respectable ratings, ranging between 29.3 and 34.8, audiences for several productions starring the English playwright and actor Noel Coward were, by comparison, minuscule. A savagely critical *Advertising Age* commentator dismissed Coward as "a dated, superficial flash-back to the 1920s" with no mass appeal. "The little old ladies just outside of the upper 1 percent mansions never heard of Mr. Coward."[90] In May 1956, Coward starred in an adaptation of his play *This Happy Breed* that averaged a very disappointing 13.6 rating. "Mr. Coward and his English family were just not for the masses," a CBS producer mused.[91] Columbia also had to contend, like NBC, with the problems of telecasting specials live to the West Coast. Many viewers found Noel Coward an acquired taste at 9:30 (ET); slating his program at 6:30 Pacific time was more than tempting fate. At that hour, children were much more likely to control the set. "We have been consistently out-rated by children's shows from the beginning of the series," remarked one Ford executive. Coward's poor ratings for several *Jubilee* productions greatly upset Ford

and "lowered the productivity of Ford Star Jubilee to a point where it is difficult to defend on a budgetary basis," Ford president Robert McNamara wrote Stanton. The automaker and its agency sought to drop the program in favor of a half-hour series. It was more efficient, in terms of cost and reaching viewers every week. McNamara wrote that "a half-hour of prime time on CBS, correctly programmed, would serve our advertising objectives better than Ford Star Jubilee over the long pull." Ford withdrew from *Jubilee* later in the year in favor of cosponsoring a Western anthology program, *Zane Grey Theater*.[92]

Undaunted, CBS refined the spectacular strategy. While reducing its special programming in 1956–57, Columbia did not abandon the concept altogether. Hubbell Robinson and others had concluded that no network could produce more than ten spectaculars a season of sufficient quality to justify their expense and the disruption of the regular schedule. "If you're going to do them," Robinson told Martin Mayer, "they should genuinely be spectaculars."[93] Rather, CBS sought to combine the cultural aspirations of dramatic spectaculars with the habit principle. Some time in 1955, Robinson had begun planning a weekly, ninety-minute program, "in the hope," two ad agents wrote, "of establishing strong loyalty in viewing habits."[94] *Playhouse 90* offered dramas, originals and adaptations, on Thursdays at 9:30. It was, *Time* observed, "the first hour-and-a-half drama factory in TV history." The first season, most episodes were telecast live. Directors and writers who had established themselves with other anthology dramas worked on *Playhouse 90*. The second telecast was *Requiem for a Heavyweight*, written by one of the leading anthology writers, Rod Serling. *Heavyweight* told the story of a boxer nearing the very end of his career. It was widely praised. "On the basis of last week's production," enthused *Time*, "*Playhouse 90* indicated that TV drama was at last coming of age." Serling himself would later say of *Requiem*, "I think it's the best thing I've ever done in my life."[95] More important to CBS, *Playhouse 90* initially enjoyed good ratings. "I just read about the ratings this morning and they were swell," the director's agent wrote after one telecast, "with 'Playhouse 90' beating out all the competition."[96]

Less successful was *The DuPont Show of the Month*. The huge chemical concern underwrote ambitious dramatic and musical plays that appeared once a month in 1957–58. Rodgers and Hammerstein composed an original musical version of the Cinderella fairy tale; Julie Andrews, still performing in the hit musical *My Fair Lady*, played the lead. *Cin-*

derella preempted *Ed Sullivan* and *G.E. Theater* on March 31, 1957. It was telecast live from New York, to accommodate Andrews's Broadway commitment, adding $50,000 to production costs. Andrews received $20,000, or more than the total paid the other principal actors. Critics, as it turned out, were quite impressed with Andrews's performance.[97] *The DuPont Show* appeared to meet the theatrical expectations for television. But offerings were plainly middlebrow. DuPont vetoed any productions of Tennessee Williams's work. Williams might be the nation's most impressive young playwright, but his plays' sexual tensions unnerved the sponsor. Then, too, the ratings for the DuPont teleplays were disappointing. Although CBS claimed that 117 million viewed *Cinderella*, other DuPont programs drew substantially smaller audiences. The large audience for *Cinderella* could be likened to that for NBC's *Peter Pan*, two years earlier. They were statistical exceptions.[98]

Like NBC, CBS telecast many of its cultural initiatives on Sunday afternoons. For three seasons, beginning in 1953–54, Columbia carried *Omnibus*, the Ford Foundation's cultural program, Sundays at 5:00 p.m. *The Seven Lively Arts*, intended to be a more lively and entertaining version of the foundation's offering, premiered in January 1957. "I want 'The Seven Lively Arts' to be a success," a friend wrote the producer. "Because it looks like the last, best chance to stop a slide into absolute apricot-jello mediocrity."[99] In one of the more ironic tributes to the power of the press, the *New York Herald Tribune*'s John Crosby was a cohost. Although handsome enough for the home screen, Crosby was excruciatingly uncomfortable on camera; his appearance was painful to watch. More successful were five adaptations of Ernest Hemingway's Nick Adams stories. An impressed Hemingway remarked, "It's almost as close to the boy as I got in the stories themselves." But the show left the air after ten telecasts. "The important thing is not that perhaps we did not succeed," Stanton later told the FCC, "but that we tried."[100]

Ed Sullivan practiced the prime-time cultural missionary work that Weaver and Liebman championed at NBC. Sullivan routinely introduced to his national audience performers and personalities from the world of arts and letters. These included the poet and author Carl Sandburg and the artist Salvador Dali. In the first seven years, New York Metropolitan Opera soprano Roberta Peters appeared twenty-one times. She and others might perform between an animal act and a stand-up comic. But they were being exposed, however briefly. (This habit may explain Weaver's wish to bring Sullivan to NBC.) Though

Weaver bragged about NBC's telecast of Sadler's Wells ballet, the company actually first appeared on *Toast of the Town*. "The experiment was an unqualified success with viewers from coast to coast," wrote the dance company's historian. Sullivan, given his background, was more dedicated to the middlebrow Broadway musical; he aired excerpts from the latest productions and dedicated entire shows to tributes to Cole Porter and Rodgers and Hammerstein.[101]

Given such efforts, Weaver's boasts drove some at CBS to distraction. Columbia, after all, carried *Omnibus* for three years and developed *Playhouse 90*. Sullivan hosted classical musicians and dancers. Moreover, CBS had the superior news division. Although Columbia was unable to develop an effective competitor to *Today*, observers, even critics like Crosby, considered CBS to be the leader in broadcast news. Columbia could rightly claim broadcasting's most respected newsman, Edward R. Murrow, who coproduced and hosted a thirty-minute documentary program, *See It Now*, which CBS aired Tuesday evenings for two years.[102]

In other ways, however, CBS had far more modest aspirations for television. No one at Columbia in the 1950s spoke with Weaver's conviction of the new medium's capacity to create an "all-people elite." Weaver believed television could enlighten a nation. His counterparts at Columbia were far less ambitious. Indeed, in a much-cited and derided argument, Stanton averred that broadcasters could not be cultural missionaries. The marketplace determined content. The listener-viewer, not the network programmer, was sovereign. "A mass medium can achieve and hold its great audience," he wrote in 1949, "only by practicing what might be called 'cultural democracy'—by giving the majority of people what they want."[103] CBS often offered cultural productions in response to NBC's initiatives. Columbia, however, deserved credit for investing more in news programs; with the exception of a Murrow celebrity interview program, *Person to Person*, news broadcasts attracted few viewers. They were essentially concessions to minorities of viewers. Yet Stanton understood that they formed part of the nation's opinion leadership, including members of Congress. And when called to testify in Washington, he routinely reminded regulators and legislators of such scheduling practices.[104]

Nevertheless, Stanton and his colleagues at Columbia were, unlike Weaver, under no illusions about their core business. Under pressure from Steve Allen's variety hour during the 1956–57 season, Ed Sullivan cut the number of Metropolitan Opera performers he scheduled.

Their appearances were thought to have reduced the show's ratings. "In the end, the Met and Sullivan separated because art and ratings did not mix," wrote Howard Taubman of the *New York Times.*[105] CBS's cultural ambitions had to be undergirded by attractive weekly series and a robust demand for TV time. When the 1957–58 recession threatened network profits, Columbia canceled a number of news programs, including Murrow's *See It Now.*[106]

"Everybody's Smart at Something"

One of CBS's most successful programming strategies began with the debut in June 1955 of *The $64,000 Question.* Producer Louis Cowan based *The $64,000 Question* on a popular 1940s radio giveaway program. The key difference was the scale of the winnings. Instead of $64 or $100, contestants might win up to $64,000. Those who failed at the $8,000 level earned a Cadillac convertible (at a time when the Cadillac was *the* luxury car in America). The host queried participants on the basis of a claimed expertise. Cowan in that regard sought to combat the decade's prevailing anti-intellectualism. He wanted, his son recalled, "to invent a TV show that would make knowledge respectable again." There were no multiple-choice questions. Contestants actually knew about the opera or boxing. Or so it seemed at the time. The first program featured Redmond O'Hanlon, a New York City police officer and Shakespeare expert. He was "the most unlikely Shakespearean scholar I ever saw," wrote a bemused John Crosby. O'Hanlon was soon followed by Gino Prato, a Bronx cobbler quizzed extensively on opera. Cowan himself remarked, "I've never subscribed to the belief that the average American radio and TV listener has a 12-year old intelligence. The average American has a brain and an integrity that's really wonderful. You just have to look for it. Everybody's smart at something."[107]

The $64,000 Question became an immediate sensation. After two months, between twenty thousand and forty thousand people a week wrote applying to be contestants. Intense press coverage of the show helped, Cowan later acknowledged. After a year it had outdistanced *I Love Lucy* in the Nielsen ratings. Learning that an NBC special on the Geneva peace summit had earned the lowest rating ever by an hour-long program, Goodman Ace proposed reworking the documentary. The Russian foreign minister could secure West Germany and other territories for the Soviet Union by correctly answering the host's questions. Texas would constitute the $64,000 prize. The Democratic Na-

tional Convention in 1956 did feature two child winners from the program who delivered partisan answers to questions posed by the "master of ceremonies," the convention chairman, Governor Frank Clements of Tennessee.[108]

No one had foreseen such success for *The $64,000 Question*. It had been a summer replacement series for a middling sitcom, *Life with Father*. (Its popularity belied, among other things, the "rule" about summer audiences.) As was frequently the case in show business, and television, *The $64,000 Question* was an unanticipated triumph. But then no one had forecast the fame that came to Milton Berle or the video durability of Ed Sullivan. "*The $64,000 Question*," NBC's Richard A. R. Pinkham reassured network affiliates late in 1955, "falls into the category of the lucky break that hits broadcasting every couple of years and is almost wholly unpredictable."[109]

The strong showing of *The $64,000 Question* sparked a programming trend. CBS launched *The $64,000 Challenge*, in which contestants on the original series who had won at least $8,000 could appear and be challenged by another participant. Despite Weaver's professed disdain for giveaway programs, one or two "stunt" shows, as he dubbed them, were worth considering. NBC tried to persuade *The $64,000 Question*'s sponsor to switch networks when its contract came up for renewal late in 1955. Unsuccessful, NBC in the fall 1956 season launched two prime-time quiz shows, *The Big Surprise* and *Twenty-One*. Weaver personally approved the latter show's addition to the schedule just before his departure. As Pinkham remarked, NBC had to adjust "to unexpected hits on rival networks by coming up with new shows."[110] NBC had considerable luck with *Twenty-One*, which bested *I Love Lucy* in the ratings in early February 1957 and might have challenged the Ricardos' Monday night supremacy altogether had NBC not remained committed to occasional spectaculars. A third quiz show, *Tic Tac Dough*, joined the schedule the following year. Counting all types of quiz programs aired during the day and evening, the three networks late in 1957 telecast 75 half hours or 37.5 hours of quiz shows.[111]

The prime-time quizzes possessed certain characteristics intended to enhance their appeal. They were telecast live, making any gesture, such as sweating or lip biting, more compelling theater. To give the contests authenticity, producers frequently placed contestants in isolation booths and introduced academic experts as authorities on the questions asked. On *The $64,000 Question*, the questions were reputedly

stored in a vault of a New York bank and shown on the air accompanied by two uniformed guards; a large IBM sorter shuffled the queries.[112]

The quiz shows, however, were never as popular as some contemporary observers thought. Although *Twenty-One* had some momentary ratings success, CBS's *$64,000 Question* was the only quiz program to finish in the Nielsen top twenty. That did not stop much of the nation's news media from inflating the quiz programs' appeal. This was partly due to locational bias of the national news media. The shows, with one exception—*Do You Trust Your Wife?*—originated in New York and received substantial coverage in many of the city's dailies, though the *Times*'s treatment was characteristically more muted. Reporters and editors, notably at the nation's two leading news magazines, *Newsweek* and *Time*, confused local attention with national interest. Simply put, much of the national journalistic community was guilty of overplaying what in many ways was a New York story.[113]

The quiz programs disproved Weaver's hypothesis that only expensive programming would maintain viewer loyalties. Despite their massive prizes, the quiz shows were relatively inexpensive. "One red-hot idea has been able to accomplish what having millions of dollars to spend could not do," remarked one advertising trade journal. Nor did the quizzes require the massive promotional efforts of a network's public relations office. They generated their own following among viewers and journalists. The Trendex service indicated the September 27, 1955, *$64,000 Question* had a higher rating than NBC's far pricier *Peter Pan*.[114]

Although the quiz programs helped to boost CBS's lead, they upset a long-term managerial goal. Paley hoped to curb the power of advertisers; earlier in the decade, Columbia was actually producing more of its own programming than NBC.[115] The quiz programs tested this objective. They were not network properties, but produced by independent companies. They had single sponsors who closely monitored each episode. Columbia had initially rejected *The $64,000 Question* because it held no proprietary stake. Cowan had approached the advertising agency Foote, Cone, and Belding with the program concept, not CBS; Revlon was the sole sponsor.[116] Nevertheless, Paley accepted a regression to the radio model of advertiser control. "Revlon's exclusive sponsorship," an industry trade journal observed, ran "counter to current industry trends toward magazine concept and alternating sponsorships."[117] As Hubbell Robinson later explained, CBS was always "looking for good programs." And "good ideas can come from anywhere."[118]

Washington may have been a secondary consideration. In 1955, two congressional committees, the Justice Department, and the FCC had launched extensive inquiries into the networks, focusing in part on their attempts to assume total or partial ownership of their programming. Conceding control of the quiz shows to advertisers, one prominent advertising agent suspected, would help quiet such critics.[119]

"Some Resemblance to Reality"

In the long run, CBS's skill at selecting dramatic and comedy series better accounted for its advantages over NBC. Although *The $64,000 Question* secured the most attention in 1955, several CBS series that premiered in the fall of 1955 enjoyed healthy ratings and far longer runs. These included two anthologies, *The Millionaire* and *Alfred Hitchcock Presents.* Although anthology dramas, that is, programs with different casts and stories each week, both programs possessed a greater product predictability than the typical anthologies. On *The Millionaire*, a different person received a million dollars (tax free) each week from the mysterious benefactor John Beresford Tipton. The story then revolved around how this sudden and unexpected wealth changed the character. The Hitchcock program played off the prestige and genre specialty of the British film director, who hosted each program. Stories were mysteries or crime drama. Both *The Millionaire* and the Hitchcock program were filmed. And as with *The $64,000 Question*, an advertising agency along with the talent agency MCA, and not CBS, conceived of the Hitchcock series.[120]

Even more popular over time was *Gunsmoke.* Based on a CBS radio drama, *Gunsmoke* took place in 1870s Dodge City, Kansas. Paley had himself come up with the concept. Episodes revolved around Marshall Matt Dillon and his attempts to keep the peace. Paley had hoped to cast John Wayne, one of the nation's most popular film stars, as Marshall Dillon. (Wayne did welcome viewers to the first episode.) Although unhappy with the series' first twenty episodes and low ratings, Paley refused to abandon the program. He personally ordered the director's replacement.[121] His instincts served him well. Although *Gunsmoke* had to compete against NBC's momentarily popular *George Gobel Show*, "Lonesome George" began to lose his legs. Viewers gradually turned to *Gunsmoke*, which finished tied for seventh (with another CBS program) in the 1956–57 Nielsens. The next four seasons, Marshall Dillon and company placed first in the Nielsens. A baffled James Baldwin remarked, "I am less ap-

palled by the fact that *Gunsmoke* is produced than I am by the fact that so many people want to see it."[122] *Gunsmoke* lasted twenty seasons.

Gunsmoke, along with ABC's *Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp*, which also premiered in September 1955, ushered in a new programming genre, "the adult Western." The earliest television Westerns, *Hopalong Cassidy*, *Roy Rogers*, and *The Cisco Kid*, tended to resemble the old movie serials. The story lines were simple and especially appealing to younger boys. (That association caused James Arness, who played Marshall Dillon, to reject the role at first. "I wanted to be seen by adults," he recalled.) The adult Western more closely resembled the prestige Western films. Gunplay often resolved an episode, but much of the story involved human relations. With a video version of *Gunsmoke* being planned, Hal Humphrey of the *Los Angeles Mirror-News* wrote of the prospect of a "western series which has some resemblance to reality." Violence was not to be celebrated. The last act shoot-out was not to bring "superior smiles or laughs," *Gunsmoke* director Ted Post remarked. "Taking a life is no joke. . . . Every time they [the heroes] put their gun away, they put it away grimly." In theory, adult Westerns appealed to all age groups, including women. They could simply be good drama in period dress. Wrote the *Columbus Dispatch*'s TV editor, "I have found myself watching some 'new-fashioned' western TV dramas this season—and found myself liking them."[123]

NBC's initial attempt to produce an adult Western represented an unfortunate rejection of the very elements that made *Gunsmoke* appealing. Hired away from CBS, Worthington Miner developed *Frontier*, which NBC aired during the 1955–56 season. *Frontier* had no permanent cast of characters. It was an anthology; each episode told a different story about western settlement. Originally planned to run an hour, *Frontier* was cut to thirty minutes. The shorter length, Miner later argued, limited the ability of the writers (both had worked on the radio version of *Gunsmoke*) to develop compelling characters. But *Gunsmoke* was also a thirty-minute series until 1961–62. Audiences simply found it easier to become familiar with its regular cast: Marshall Dillon, Miss Kitty, Chester, and Doc. More fateful, perhaps, was that *Frontier* was scheduled against Jack Benny. All in all, NBC failed to show the same faith in the project as Paley had in *Gunsmoke*. Its fans in time included Lady Bird Johnson, the wife of the then Senate Democratic leader. By the time her husband became president, *Gunsmoke* was Lady Bird's favorite program.[124]

The adult Western was well positioned to flourish in the late 1950s. By then, TV had reached smaller cities and towns in the South and West, where Western films had always been popular. Yet it would be a mistake to give too much weight to TV's coming to Butte, Montana, or Van Buren, Arkansas. Many big-city dwellers enjoyed Westerns. As the anthropologist Hortense Powdermaker observed in 1950, the Western had been the one film genre "which has met with a fairly consistent success over a long period of time." Country music similarly had its urban fans. Indeed, one study suggested that class, not region, better predicted a preference for country music. Regardless of location, some white, working- and lower-class Americans developed a taste for country music.[125]

Not all CBS productions benefited from the nationalization of the television audience. Newer viewers tended to be less enthusiastic about some New York–centered shows. NBC's Berle was this trend's most famous casualty. And some Columbia programs suffered as well. Small-town America was perhaps two generations removed from being in awe of the Great White Way to watch many of the *DuPont Shows.* Gleason revived his variety program from New York for the 1956–57 season but was never able to match earlier ratings success. ABC's clever Western *Maverick* helped to knock Ed Sullivan out of the Nielsen top twenty-five for two seasons. Not until the 1963–64 season, which included a February 1964 appearance by the heavily promoted British rock group the Beatles, did Sullivan's show again finish in the top ten.[126]

Weaver's Gift

Although Weaver's cultural ambitions for the newest medium—and some of the spectaculars—impressed many critics, they failed to restore NBC's position, which continued to deteriorate. CBS had won the ratings and billings battles. In 1956, the company's annual report bragged, more Americans watched Columbia programs than those for ABC and NBC combined. CBS's rate of return on net assets, an FCC study concluded, was 44 percent, compared to NBC's 36 percent.[127]

Unlike NBC, Columbia had succeeded on the cheap. It had better identified potential but less expensive television talent like Phil Silvers, Lucille Ball, and Jackie Gleason. Repeatedly, NBC poured more resources and more money into programs. With few exceptions, CBS series cost less—yet won more viewers. Planning its 1956–57 advertising budget, Ford Motor Company, one of the medium's biggest advertis-

ers, decided to give preference to sponsoring programs on Columbia. Ford's agency, J. Walter Thompson, concluded that CBS "has proven greater ability to locate and hold good programs which deliver greater circulation at lower cost per thousand."[128] "It's generally agreed both in and out of the industry," *Variety* concluded in November 1956, "that the Columbia regime, of all the webs, has been operating at maximum effectiveness."[129]

Yet to a very great extent, Weaver and NBC had handed victory to Columbia. RCA had built the House of Television and Paley moved into the master suite. Weaver was the great strategist; his competitors at CBS proved the better tacticians, far superior at the day-to-day, season-to-season plotting needed to win the great race. Observed one J. Walter Thompson executive in November 1956, "NBC has defaulted to second place."[130]

7 "We Just See That It Isn't Lousy"

A live show is never seen again. So if I happen to say anything that strikes you as funny, please laugh now. It's the last chance you'll ever get.
George Burns, 1958

Show business had a hierarchy in the late 1940s. Americans spent more time listening to the radio than reading newspapers or going to the movies. That said, the motion picture industry, with its elaborate public relations machinery, possessed the greater glamour. No radio star could compete with a Clark Gable or Bette Davis. Some might rank Broadway and New York's largest night clubs first. These included New Yorkers and the good burghers elsewhere who subscribed to the *New Yorker* and visited the city once or twice a year. A critically well-received theatrical run earned performers and writers prestige. But not much more.

For all the machinations of the networks, advertisers, and regulators, the fate of television ultimately depended on those who wrote, directed, and appeared on the programs. People did not spend their hard-earned money on a television set to stare at a test pattern. Not for very long, at least. In the beginning, everyone in show business—actors, directors, and writers—was asked about television. Would they appear on the home screen? Would they star in a series?

Talent: On the Air

Film performers who considered television had to weigh several factors. Although popular mythology argued otherwise, the larger studios, despite believing that TV was cutting into their already declining busi-

ness, did not ban their stars from appearing on television. From the beginning, most moviemakers understood the promotional value of the newer medium. A guest shot on Ed Sullivan's popular variety show, *Toast of the Town*, was expected to help promote a theatrical release.[1] Frank Sinatra's appearance on Milton Berle's program coincided with the opening of one of his films. "We don't plug any pictures," Berle cried. "Frankie, you can stand here and argue from here to eternity and I won't mention the picture."[2]

Committing to a weekly or biweekly show was another matter. Most were to varying degrees unhappy about working in New York, where the bulk of network shows originated. The few who preferred New York to Los Angeles—Fred Allen, Jackie Gleason, and Phil Silvers—could only fill so many hours. The great majority of radio and motion picture talent chose southern California. Radio stars on the West Coast could appear in films and recruit movie stars to appear on their show. And they could enjoy a far better climate and convenient lifestyle compared with New York. "For years," the comedy writer Larry Gelbart recalled, "Los Angeles was the place where people came to get away from what was wrong with all those other places. L.A. was where life, where your life, was going to shine."[3] Before its freeways became choked with traffic and its air thick with smog, Los Angeles was the American Eden. Especially to the many who had practiced the self-denial that came with establishing a show business career, the long periods on the road, the bad accommodations. Bandleader Ozzie Nelson recalled "one dismal, rainy night" in the early 1940s. "We were en route from someplace to someplace and I was so tired I checked into a dingy little hotel in a small town in Missouri. As I was lying on the bed talking on the phone to Harriet [his wife], I happened to glance over in the corner and there was a mousetrap with a dead mouse in it. Yes sir! There's nothing like the glamor of show business!"[4] A southern California home with a swimming pool was a welcome reward. "The majority revel in the sunshine and lush climate," wrote the anthropologist Hortense Powdermaker, and "enjoy a middle-class comfort or an upper-class luxury they never knew before."[5]

Climate gave Greater Los Angeles another advantage over New York. One could play golf year-round. Jack Benny, Bob Hope, and Bing Crosby were among the addicted. Benny played seven days a week. Crosby died shortly after playing a course in Spain. He had shot an 85 and won the round.[6] When Bob and Dolores Hope moved west in

1941, they settled into a section of North Hollywood near a golf course. Hope's film and radio work, his biographer noted, "was demanding but comfortable; it was nicely geared to his golf game."[7]

Even if a program could originate from the pro shop, how people looked on the small screen could be a disincentive. "You could see them perspire," Crosby noted. "I've watched those poor fellows on the live shows, the sweat pouring out of them," he remarked.[8] The veteran actor Sidney Blackmer likened TV to doing summer stock in an iron lung. Female movie stars settling into middle age fretted over their appearance. Such anxieties caused Bette Davis, in her forties, to spurn most offers to do live television shows. The lighting and makeup had to be just so. "It's Bette's claim," wrote one reporter, "that no movie queen past 25 can possibly look the same on home screens as she does on big theater screens."[9] Film star Rosalind Russell, also in her forties, turned down the lead in NBC's spectacular *Lady in the Dark*. "Live television isn't for me," Russell explained. "The wrong camera picks you up by mistake and your career can be ruined. No thank you!"[10]

Having to perform in "real time" left motion picture actors and actresses, certainly those without training in theater or long removed from the stage, uneasy. They could remember lines and blocking, but in short spurts. A ninety-minute feature film consisted of multiple takes. A filmed sequence could be reshot if a line was flubbed. When Clark Gable was asked to appear in a *Ford Star Jubilee* adaptation of the play *Men in White*, an ad agent reported that the actor "would only be interested in doing this on film."[11]

Dancers tended to be perfectionists, especially determined to get it right. For one film, Fred Astaire insisted on forty-seven takes of a single routine.[12] Donald O'Connor hosted an NBC variety hour live but without enthusiasm. "In films, a dance sequence can be shot over and over again until it is perfect," the *Los Angeles Times* observed. "This doesn't hold up in television because it boils down to a one-take affair. When that red light glows atop the video cameras, it's then or never and no chance for retakes."[13]

Disasters *did* occur on live television. When Jo Stafford sang "Let Me Go, Lover" on a CBS program in 1955, an actor slipped and ripped off her skirt. The alert camera operator did a close-up and Stafford kept singing. "It was hysterical," Stafford remarked. "There I was clutching at my skirt and singing 'Let me go, let me go.'" "'Let me go to film,'" cracked one reporter, "is what Jo Stafford says she really meant."[14] Re-

calling his live TV work, David Niven wrote of acting "in front of cameras which collided with sickening regularity and scenery that wobbled and often collapsed."[15]

Even radio performers were beginning to insist on recording their programs, over the objections of the networks and sponsors. Here the concern was less vanity than inconvenience. Bing Crosby led the fight for transcriptions in part because live performances bound him to a fixed schedule that, among other things, prevented him from sampling distant golf courses. Recording his program allowed him to travel. For Ozzie and Harriet Nelson, transcribing their radio show permitted their two sons, members of the cast, to attend school. "This was fortunate," Ozzie Nelson recalled, "because neither boy was exactly enamored of school anyway."[16]

Much as some radio performers might prefer recording their programs, real-time performance did not intimidate them. (Such was the "live" expectation that shows originating from California frequently did two broadcasts, one for the eastern and central time zones, and a second for the West Coast network affiliates.) Still, a radio show could be easy money—many film stars moonlighted doing radio programs. Cast members read from a script. A televised performance would require memorizing lines, then learning that the director had to drop two pages of the script. There were costume fittings, and knowing where to stand or sit. Having watched performers rehearse a TV play, John Crosby remarked, "Unlike radio, they have no scripts. Unlike the movies, they can't do retakes. Unlike the theater, the curtain never comes down. Once on the air, there is no respite."[17]

Because of New York's centrality, many of television's first performers came from the city's theaters. Tom Ewell had spent fourteen years on Broadway, appearing, the *Los Angeles Times* reported, "in twenty-eight successive box-office failures."[18] Conditioned to live performance, Ewell and others could deal with the greater chaos of acting in tiny studios and under strict time limits. "You have to be stage-trained to do a good live show," the actor Jimmy Dunn declared.[19] Live television's performers, the director Arthur Penn recalled, "were theater actors, not actors who needed four takes or five takes. They were able to just get up and go from eight o'clock to nine o'clock without stopping, performing a full play."[20]

They also came cheap. Most of television's earliest shows had tight budgets. *Kraft Television Theatre* paid some performers as little as $75

a week. Although CBS's weekly dramatic program *Studio One* quickly acquired prestige, compensation was modest: top players earned $750, which included two weeks of rehearsals. Producer Worthington Miner admitted that "at that price we had to discover our own 'stars of tomorrow.'"[21] Years later, television's first wave of young performers remembered apartments with no heat and living on a dollar a day. "If somebody got a job," Richard Kiley recalled, "they would automatically start the spaghetti and the cheap wine, and everybody from all of the rooms would come down."[22]

Many also tended to be women and men whose careers in film or radio were going nowhere. In Hollywood especially, stardom had to be achieved early. Before World War II, one social scientist determined, success in motion pictures had an age bias. For most women it came between the ages of 25 and 29, for men, 30 to 34.[23] Some missed the bus. In her 1950 study, Powdermaker described several types of Hollywood players, including "Miss Frustrated" and "Mr. Bitter." As their hopes of stardom dimmed, such performers had to reconcile themselves to occasional supporting roles and radio work.[24] They would be prime candidates for television work.

One of TV's first popular stars fell into this category. Faye Emerson had been a Warner Brothers contract player in the early 1940s. With little career to sacrifice, she quit Hollywood for New York City. She starred in a 1948 Broadway play and then began hosting TV programs on a New York station. Her casting on a CBS show had been, like Berle's, accidental. The actress originally slated to host a talk program fell ill. "Darned clever accident," the show business columnist Earl Wilson wrote. "Brilliant accident." Like Uncle Miltie, Emerson quickly connected with viewers. In fact, she momentarily ranked with Berle and others among the newest medium's most popular personalities. She was glamorous yet friendly. Her sponsor, Pepsi, described her as "wholesomely natural." Emerson proved especially skilled at interviewing guests. Her insistence on wearing low-cut cocktail dresses distracted many viewers, while intriguing others. Observed a leering John Crosby, "Miss Emerson, I'd be the first to admit, fills a ten-inch screen very adequately. Very adequately."[25]

A second tier of film actors and actresses migrated to television. Although they had enjoyed more success than Emerson, none had achieved—or sustained—top billing. Many had to settle for supporting parts or starring roles in minor features. Among the first in that cate-

gory to do television work were the film actors Ralph Bellamy and Don Ameche. Reduced to secondary roles, both realized they might achieve stardom in another medium. Bellamy appeared in *NBC Repertory Theatre* in 1949 and starred for five years beginning that year in the CBS detective drama *Man against Crime*. In 1950, Ameche hosted an audience-participation program, *Take a Chance*, and a musical variety show, *Holiday Hotel*. He moved his wife and six children to New York.[26]

Television awarded a second chance to one for whom fame had become a distant memory. William Boyd had been a silent screen idol in the 1920s only to spend the next two decades appearing as Hopalong Cassidy in cheap Western movie serials mainly appealing to young boys. Anticipating that the Hoppy films might be popular on television, Boyd secured the TV rights to most of the Cassidy features and rented them to individual stations and NBC. They were a momentary sensation, prompting at least one journalist to note the irony of Boyd appealing to youngsters whose grandmothers had numbered among his fans a quarter century earlier. Very much the entrepreneur, Boyd even secured the rights to the Hoppy image, which marketers, eager to win TV's younger viewers, used to promote various products. Beatrice Foods of Chicago sold Hopalong Cassidy Chocolate Coated Frozen Dairy Bars. "It's mighty delicious," Hoppy declared on each wrapper. Boyd predicted that Hoppy-brand products would gross between $80 and $100 million in 1950. Suddenly flush with cash, Boyd bought himself a limousine adorned with the Hoppy insignia and white leather upholstery.[27]

Wanting to capture some of the market for older Westerns, Gene Autry followed Boyd's lead by starring in a half-hour series on CBS beginning in 1950. The singing cowboy's star had not dimmed quite so much as Boyd's. But his films had never been huge box-office hits. Autry learned just how lucrative video could be. Sponsor fees for one New York station, Autry told *Variety*, equaled a year's gross from one of his feature film's nationwide distribution. Still, his television series included plugs for his forthcoming full-length theatrical features. Autry shrewdly argued that his TV program, appealing to very young viewers, created future patrons of his motion pictures. "When they're old enough to go to theatres," he explained, "they'll be ready-made fans and customers."[28]

Another category of early television performers more closely resembled the second- or third-tier Hollywood performers. These were

comics who, though having done some film work, mostly performed at night clubs and musical revues. They were the successors to the entertainers who, with vaudeville dying in the late 1920s and early 1930s, had relocated to network radio. Milton Berle was the video archetype, followed in time by Jackie Gleason and Phil Silvers. Such comics were long conditioned to live performance. Praising Jimmy Durante's video debut in November 1950, one TV critic observed, "Durante, an old hand at working the confining quarters of nightclubs, found the intimacy of TV was right down his alley."[29]

Radio's stars were more reluctant to jump ship, especially considering the size of the television audience. For all the attention Milton Berle, Hopalong Cassidy, and Faye Emerson received in 1948 and 1949, relatively few American homes—2.3 percent in 1949—had televisions. Established players might reconcile themselves to TV work when more Americans had televisions. As Eddie Cantor cracked, "Why play to the first four rows?"[30]

But Berle proved to be an aggravating inspiration. No early TV performer played to larger audiences or netted more publicity. Set owners' enthusiasm for Berle puzzled and annoyed many of his peers. They regarded him as less talented than brash. Although many joked about his comic plagiarism, it was a resented practice. (Berle himself mocked his reputation for stealing material. In one sketch, when the actor Dennis King wanted to do a scene from *Macbeth*, Berle demurred. "How can you do material that's 350 years old?" To which King replied, "*You* should ask a question like that?")[31] Nevertheless, Berle's success on the small screen fascinated his fellow comedians. "If Berle's impact on the public was phenomenal," wrote Larry Gelbart, "consider his effect on other performers, performers frightened and/or intrigued by yet another way to reach an audience, to enhance or extend a career. It is customary for new forms to be snubbed by practitioners of the old. Yet here was one of their own, a headliner, a proven success, who was daring enough to crawl inside this strange little box every week, to act as a canary in a coal mine while learning how to master the medium in full view of millions. Berle was everybody's New Haven."[32]

Carefully, radio's leading comics plotted their move to television. Once TV reached a certain percentage of homes, Jack Benny acknowledged that, much as he preferred radio, he would make the transition. Intensive negotiation followed. When the coaxial cable reached Los Angeles, his program would originate from the West Coast. He would

not move back to New York except for a limited number of shows. Nor would most of his peers.[33]

Few would do weekly series, much as sponsors and others prized the habit principle. The hottest comedy team of the early 1950s, Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, would only make eight TV appearances a season, hosting NBC's Colgate show once a month, with summers off.[34] Jack Benny appeared irregularly during his first season, 1950–51. "Don't expect to find my program listed on the television page of your newspaper," he told viewers during his debut show. "It'll probably be marked on your calendar under Full Moon."[35] Benny did four TV shows during the 1950–51 season, and six the following year. Columbia made the best of the arrangement by scheduling Benny's fall 1952 shows the same weeks Trendex conducted its audience ratings.[36] The caution of Benny, Crosby, and others was partly explained by their determination to continue doing their weekly radio series. Most gave up the older medium by the mid–1950s.[37] As late as the 1959–60 season, however, Benny only did fifteen TV shows per season.[38] This practice certainly broke with industry convention—and expectation. Although Benny's program had good ratings, many thought they were smaller because he would not appear every seven days. "If Jack had a weekly show," his publicist remarked, "you'd see his ratings take a big jump."[39] But in the late 1940s and early 1950s, a weekly series meant a commitment to do thirty-nine shows a season. It would be too much. This was especially true for the hosts of variety hours. "Doing a live show every week," Ed Wynn's son observed, "is one of our civilization's tortures except for the very strong or the very casual."[40] Ed Wynn, an excitable comic in his mid-sixties, was neither.

A weekly commitment also lessened chances to perform in films or night clubs. Appearing once a month, one agent explained, "gives a star the flexibility of being on TV and yet being able to go [on] with other facets of his or her career."[41] William Bendix starred in the popular radio comedy *The Life of Riley* beginning in 1943, while also appearing, usually in supporting roles, in feature films. Bendix declined NBC's offer to do a video version of *Riley* in 1949 because it would restrict opportunities to appear in films. The network then cast the relatively unknown Jackie Gleason in the TV *Riley.* The Gleason *Riley* lasted one season. Several years later, with his motion picture prospects disappearing, Bendix agreed to star in a second *Life of Riley*, which ran for five and half seasons.[42]

Finally, many seasoned players believed that if they appeared every week audiences would tire of their shtick. "Overexposure," Keenan Wynn wrote, "is the danger that haunts every comic on a weekly series." "Anybody who allows himself to appear on television once a week," Bing Crosby remarked, "is out of his mind. Exposure like that devours you."[43] "You have a better chance to be good on TV," the film star Kirk Douglas remarked, "if you don't do too much of it."[44] Others shared in this assumption. Benny, as well as Burns and Allen, initially refused to appear every week. Audiences, wrote Benny, "would tire of Cary Grant if they saw him every week or every other week."[45]

Most performers, however, lacked their leverage. Second- or third-tier talent had no choice but to do weekly programs, despite the far more intense workload. Although Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz proved to be among the top stars of the newest medium, they hardly ranked with Crosby or Benny when negotiating a series deal with CBS. In 1951, Ball and Arnaz agreed to produce thirty-nine episodes a year of *I Love Lucy.* "We are up to our necks in TV now and wondering how long we can stand the pace," Ball wrote a friend several months before the program's debut. "I'm getting to do what I want to do—and so is Desi—but it's such a grind."[46] Ozzie and Harriet Nelson similarly relented and starred in ABC's *Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet,* which debuted on ABC in October 1952. It was very work intensive. To contain costs—the first six episodes were budgeted at fourteen thousand dollars per program—Ozzie Nelson served as producer, director, story editor, and head writer while his wife and costar oversaw set decoration.[47]

Motion picture performers found the small-screen switch more complicated. Keenan Wynn, who had appeared in films as well as live television, observed the transition firsthand. TV producers shot a half-hour series episode in three days. "In a movie studio," Wynn wrote, "that would take three weeks. The movie-trained actor is used to doing two lines, then 'Cut!'"[48] "Time is an important consideration," the film director Alfred Hitchcock observed about TV production. "A half-hour TV film must be made in three days, because the nice mogul who gives us the money can't afford any more than a certain amount. He is a poor mogul."[49]

Ronald Colman, a longtime Hollywood star, found transferring his radio program, *The Halls of Ivy,* to the home screen in 1954 to be an ordeal. Working from a radio script had been easy for Colman, in his early sixties; mastering the physical movements TV required proved

taxing. "He was quick in thinking but not quick in action," his daughter wrote. "Nothing was impulsive; everything was calculated, every move was calculated, and there was not time for that in television." And he only had four days to shoot an episode. Moreover, neither Colman nor his wife and costar, Benita Hume, could come to terms with their aging looks. Hume dieted and wore special nylon nets that tightened her skin and lifted her chin. These sometimes popped under the lights and scenes had to be done again. Even when this technology worked, Hume and Colman were occasionally dismayed by their appearance and ordered that sequences be reshot. When asked about the rushes for one scene, Benita Hume replied, "What scene, what play? All I ever see is my chin!" *The Halls of Ivy* ran one season. It was an especially long one for Colman. "Ronnie's health and vitality never bounced back after finishing *Ivy*," his daughter recalled. "It had been a tough haul and it showed."[50] He died several years later.

By comparison, African American actors and actresses witnessed the advent of television with some optimism. In the 1940s network radio and the motion picture industry had boosted their casting of black performers. During World War II, the federal government had persuaded the radio networks to offer programs more appealing to black listeners while admonishing both broadcasters and filmmakers to soften older, racist stereotypes.[51] Jack Benny's comic valet, Rochester, became more assertive—and more popular. In early 1947, he was the highest paid member of Benny's ensemble.[52] Television, it appeared, would follow radio's new inclusiveness. In 1948, the New York stations owned by CBS and the Du Mont Network carried musical variety programs starring African American performers. Both Columbia and Du Mont in turn produced network prime-time series with black stars. In a letter to a civil rights leader, an NBC executive wrote of "NBC's long established policy of employing performers on the basis of ability without regard to creed or color." ABC's situation comedy, *Beulah*, which premiered in October 1950, starred Ethel Waters as a maid. On the radio series, a white male actor had long played Beulah. A year later, a video version of *Amos 'n' Andy* came to television. Unlike the radio series, the TV *Amos 'n' Andy* had an African American cast. *Ebony* magazine declared TV "free of racial barriers."[53]

Rather than marking integration of the network schedule, *Amos 'n' Andy* and *Beulah* proved to be prime-time anomalies. Although *Amos 'n' Andy* had good ratings in its first year, it never matched its radio success

and left the air after two seasons. ABC canceled *Beulah* in 1953. Blacks had to settle for a few supporting roles on situation comedies and *The Jack Benny Show*. Biracial ensembles were so unusual that when *The Kraft Television Theatre* cast an African American as a maid on one 1955 program, an NBC executive praised the producers for the gesture—and for giving her "lines in no way condescending."[54]

That said, blacks *did* routinely appear on TV. Because many of them were featured on live telecasts, their presence has been largely unnoticed by subsequent generations. In 1953, African American celebrities were guests on *What's My Line?* Some dropped in on *The Today Show*. Variety programs often invited African American entertainers. Producer Max Liebman included black singers on his TV programs. The Billy Williams Quartet, as well as individual African American singers, regularly performed on *Your Show of Shows*. A black artists council singled out NBC's *Kate Smith Hour* for its frequent inclusion of African American talent. Ed Sullivan proved perhaps the single greatest champion of integrating his program. One of his earliest shows featured the singer Sarah Vaughan among other African American performers. "There wasn't an important black artist," wrote John Leonard, "who didn't appear on the Sullivan show."[55]

Such integration occurred despite the ardent opposition of many white viewers, most living in the South. White southerners looked warily on any attempt by New York–centered broadcasters to undermine the South's rigid system of segregation. Casting or situations that implied racial equality fueled the most intense reaction. Even a Manhattan woman complained about the African American opera singer Leontyne Price appearing in an NBC production of *Tosca*. "I find this deliberate inter-racial propaganda extremely offensive and believe it to be both premature and mis-guided," she wrote. On *The Colgate Comedy Hour*; 17 February 1952, the host Eddie Cantor used his handkerchief, a frequent personal prop, to wipe the perspiring face of the African American singer-dancer Sammy Davis Jr. "Vicious, racist mail poured in to NBC," wrote Cantor's biographer. "Eddie Cantor," wrote one viewer, "How dare you mop that coon's face with your handkerchief on national TV?" Cantor was stunned.[56]

Networks and advertisers could anticipate such correspondence throughout the decade. And sponsors—fearing the occasional boycott—had no stomach for controversy. ABC was unable to find an advertiser for a situation comedy starring Davis in 1954 in part because

the young star refused to play an *Amos 'n' Andy* type. "Either ABC, the sponsors (or both)," wrote the black show business reporter Chick Webb, "wanted the polished, younger performer to 'honeychile' his presentation to conform with the Negro stereotype." A final obstacle was stations in the South, which occasionally declined to air programs featuring black performers. Some southern NBC affiliates refused to carry performances by Leontyne Price.[57]

Undaunted, civil rights groups urged the networks to extend opportunities to blacks. They protested NBC's casting of a white performer in the role of the Moorish king in a Christmas 1951 production of *Amahl and the Night Visitors.* But African Americans sought more than individual on-air roles. Blacks would not be satisfied, Chick Webb wrote, "until Negro performers are seen heading their own shows—not merely as 'guest artists' or on special programming."[58] Not all African Americans, however, embraced the airing of just *any* program with blacks in the leads. The NAACP, the nation's leading civil rights organization, harshly criticized *Amos 'n' Andy.* Although many blacks enjoyed the broad comedy, the NAACP's predominantly middle-class membership, championing liberal assimilation, objected to the show's blatant stereotyping. Just days after the program's premiere, the NAACP asked that it be canceled.[59]

To their credit, the networks kept trying. NBC aggressively wooed African American leaders and signed the Brooklyn Dodgers' Jackie Robinson, who had integrated Major League Baseball, to a network contract. Robinson grew frustrated with the absence of opportunities to perform on camera and quit.[60] NBC redoubled its efforts as CBS and Du Mont in 1955 aired more African American talent—and black leaders threatened to organize viewer boycotts. In 1956, NBC met Webb's goal, offering a musical program starring the popular black singer Nat King Cole. Despite Cole's decidedly mainstream appeal, his show had weak ratings that discouraged advertisers and doomed the effort. Dramatic programs, the most lily-white video fare, only gradually began casting blacks. Not until 1956 did the popular crime drama *Dragnet* feature a black actor. *Dragnet*'s writers, one black viewer complained, "believe Los Angeles [has] no Negro policemen, no Negro criminals, no Negro citizens who are victims of crime or witnesses or innocent bystanders."[61] "When an 'extra' or incidental character could be of any racial background," wrote the broadcast historian J. Fred MacDonald, "invariably he or she was white."[62]

The more well-intentioned industry insiders did not always understand racial sensitivities. CBS executives could not fathom objections to *Amos 'n' Andy.* Both Cantor and band leader Fred Waring were praised for their inclusion of black talent on their programs. Yet both men, at least once, performed on TV in blackface, that most mocking of racial caricatures.[63]

Talent: Behind the Camera

While many African Americans regarded television's possibilities positively, much of Hollywood hoped the newest medium would prove a passing fancy—and no permanent threat to the big screen. Such thoughts were not entirely delusional. A 1951 Detroit survey indicated that television could not, in fact, satiate consumers' need for mass entertainment. After a year's ownership, set owners polled had started patronizing the theaters again. Others in the industry believed that filmgoing filled the basic need of many consumers to escape the home. Producer Jerry Wald explained, "Imagine a guy comes home after work and says to his wife, 'Honey, I got a big surprise for you, a big celebration. We're going to stay home and look at the television.' She'd spit in his eye."[64]

Even some in television wondered if Hollywood might not win back audiences. In the summer of 1955, leading NBC affiliates complained about the growing presence of film stars on television, plugging their new features. This would only encourage movie attendance, at the expense of television viewing. Acknowledging "a competitive problem," in a letter to one station manager, NBC vice president Robert W. Sarnoff justified the trend. "We can get real audience values out of featuring a movie star in our programs, and usually the price of doing so is plugging the star's movie." Still, Sarnoff admitted that "the movies may be getting greater values than the networks." He promised that he and his colleagues would "control the situation as closely as we can."[65]

Hollywood's coming to terms with television was slowed by filmmakers' contempt for the newest medium. In the movie colony, the screenwriter Nunnally Johnson claimed, *not* owning a television prompted friends to appear uninvited. "When the word gets around this town that you have no televison set in your home you are really in trouble. From then on your home is full of people getting away from their sets, drinking your liquor, and never leaving until after midnight," Johnson wrote in November 1950. "Television is the only medium of entertainment

in the history of the world in which you can get about a hundred times more fun when it is broken than when it's operating okay."[66]

Although show business reporters made much of this professed disdain, such stories obscured a division within the movie colony regarding television. From the start, a cluster of smaller studios led by United Artists engaged in TV production. Not owning theaters, they had little or nothing to lose if television cut deeply into already falling exhibition numbers. Their initial market included the networks as well as stations, many of which, lacking a direct link to the networks, scrambled to fill their schedules. "The demand for low-cost film productions made especially for television," observed one film executive, "is unquestionable."[67]

Most of the larger studios viewed television with far less enthusiasm. They produced the vast majority (80%, Abel Green of *Variety* estimated in early 1949) of feature films; they had much more at risk if the bottom fell out of the market for theatrical releases. Nor did they wish to anger exhibitors, most of whom were blaming television for the decline of their business. (Theater owners even threatened to cease showing Autry's features if he did not withdraw from television production.)[68] At the same time, the studios religiously placed feature films atop the show business hierarchy. Even after they began cooperating with the networks, they considered making motion pictures—not producing television shows—to be their primary undertaking. Although the director Alfred Hitchcock agreed in 1955 to participate in a CBS series, two of his then well-regarded colleagues, Joseph Mankiewicz and John Huston, could not come to similar terms.[69]

The film industry thought it had the stronger hand. Hollywood possessed many advantages over New York in terms of popular performers and production facilities. The networks would have to strike a favorable deal. They had too much airtime to fill. "Television must turn to Hollywood for entertainment of a kind and quality it cannot itself produce," the producer Samuel Goldwyn wrote late in 1951. "Television cannot continue to hold its audience indefinitely if it confines itself to the type of entertainment it is now offering. It is burning up talent at a rate unheard of in entertainment history."[70]

The bigger studios wanted to control the terms of trade. They were convinced that the networks and their sponsors could not afford the high-end film product. The earliest filmed TV shows had been so cheaply made as to leave many on both coasts dismayed. A well-crafted

filmed series would cost too much. Several studios hoped for the successful launching of theater television or pay-TV systems.[71]

At the same time, the studios had to bring order to their primary businesses. Most had been forced by a Justice Department consent decree to sell off their chains of theaters. With demand for features declining, most studios began cutting expenses. Contract performers and production employees were laid off, from a peak of twenty-four thousand in 1946 to about thirteen thousand ten years later. "The contract list was melting fast as some stars found their options dropped and others ran scared and resigned," Keenan Wynn recalled. "The same held true for every level of studio worker."[72] "I know a director," quipped one comedy writer, "who's down to his last race horse. And if things keep up like this, he may have to wind up eating him."[73]

The two most powerful networks had mixed feelings about the largest film companies. Weaver of NBC was the most resistant. He did not believe that the studios shared his cultural ambitions for TV, though he did seek to strike a deal with Walt Disney Studios. CBS was characteristically coy. It would negotiate with a studio if it liked the proposition. Both worried that a disproportionate reliance on film contradicted an emphasis on live broadcasts, which justified the networks. Then, too, if filmed programs flooded the schedule, new networks, relying on filmed programming and not requiring direct cable connection to stations, might enter television.

Then there was the Paley's raids effect. Neither NBC nor CBS wanted to lose a popular program to its rival. If a nonnetwork production became a hit, both sought to acquire partial or complete ownership. By the mid–1950s, all of the networks preferred to control properties by cofinancing projects, especially as the residual value of filmed series began to become apparent. Early in 1956, ABC offered to consider a Screen Gems series only if, after helping finance the pilot, the network secured 50 percent of the program's profits. ABC rejected Screen Gems's counteroffer to pay for the pilot but retain the profits. "ABC wanted control of the future of the series, if it were to have a future," an industry representative explained to the FCC, "and to avoid being put in the position *of losing the series to another network*."[74]

Everyone wrestled with the issue of expenses. A well-made filmed program cost more than a live telecast. Huge overhead significantly increased the cost of studio productions. And it was initially unclear that a program could recover some expenditures by being rerun in the

summer or syndication. In that spirit, Jack Benny did his television live until his fourth season, when he occasionally appeared in a filmed episode.[75] "A live show is never seen again," George Burns explained in one opening monologue. "So if I happen to say anything that strikes you as funny, please laugh now. It's the last chance you'll ever get."[76] Again, the industry rule had been that rebroadcasts of the same program would be a ratings loser. During the 1959–60 season, for example, only five Benny programs were repeated.[77]

Several heretics challenged this conventional wisdom. In the late 1940s, producers Jerry Fairbanks and Hal Roach Jr. began filming TV series. They did not have the substantial overhead costs that hampered the largest studios. "The Fairbanks studio is shabby and paint-peeling," the journalist Milton MacKaye wrote in 1952. Such appearances reflected Fairbanks's penny-pinching ways. Compared with a major studio, Fairbanks wasted no time shooting. "Every detail had been completely planned in advance, even down to the camera angles," MacKaye wrote. A half-hour show was filmed in a day and a half.[78] Mindful that their product was intended for a small screen, producers like Fairbanks limited costs with fewer long shots, which could add to scenery expenses and require more intricate lighting. All in all, these efficiencies gave the small producers a competitive advantage. Produced by an independent company, the thirty-minute drama *Fireside Theatre* cost about seventeen thousand dollars per episode in mid–1951.[79]

Despite lower production costs, such series could only earn money from fees garnered during subsequent telecasts. Roach initially thought having multiple sponsors would cover the higher costs of film. NBC executives negotiating with Roach late in 1948 were doubtful. As one wrote, "you are going to have to depend upon second runs and residual value to get your money out of the film."[80] Roach quickly agreed. "You heard the argument on any New York street corner that TV would never be on film and the TV industry never would come to the West Coast," Roach recalled. "They couldn't understand our argument that filmed shows could be used over and over." Within a few years, Roach and Fairbanks were industry prophets as a market among individual stations for reruns grew. Rebroadcasts of *I Love Lucy* and other filmed series suggested a stronger than anticipated demand for once-aired programming. (That said, the networks at first used reruns to fill their *daytime* schedules.)[81]

The economics of television production was being reinvented. As Fairbanks and Roach had forecast, first-run losses could be recovered

when the series was retelecast and then syndicated to individual stations. For TV production units, the risk was producing a series that died quickly. Many departed after a year or less on the network; their residual value was virtually nil. But for series that ran for three or more years, losses incurred from their production would be recovered by the syndication fees.[82] The "vidpixer," wrote one *Variety* reporter late in 1955, "granted his original large investment . . . is in a position subsequently, or at least ultimately (after the network run) to cash in. This comes X number of seasons after the original underwriter has been used as a sort of catspaw [*sic*] for the telefilmer's main objective, to get the show on the network air and cash in later, if not then and there."[83]

As the residual benefits of filmed series grew, the networks sought a piece of the action. They used their financial leverage with smaller producers to gain a share of the syndication earnings of popular series. In 1954, CBS paid $1 million for a 24 percent interest in Desilu, which needed the capital to expand, and spent another $1 million three years later for the syndication rights of *December Bride* and *I Love Lucy*. ABC charged advertisers less than the cost of producing *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* in 1956, but had a 40 percent share of any profits accrued in syndication. Rerun rights were secured in exchange for cofinancing the pilot of the program or, most often, simply agreeing to carry the series.[84]

The new economics of TV production was hardly clear when Columbia Pictures quietly and modestly entered television production. A Columbia subsidiary, Screen Gems, started producing TV commercials in 1949. Several years later, Screen Gems agreed to film a half-hour anthology series for Ford that ran five years. It was soon assembling series. *The Adventures of Rin Tin Tin*, a Western about a boy and his German shepherd adopted by a U.S. cavalry troop, was ABC's second most popular program during the 1954–55 season.[85] Because the show business press preferred to play up the rivalry between the movie industry and television, Screen Gems received little notice.

ABC, the struggling third network, made far more headlines with a successful partnership with a Hollywood studio. United Paramount Theatres (UPT), formerly the exhibition wing of Paramount Pictures, had merged with ABC early in 1953. Even before the merger, ABC president Robert E. Kintner had eyed Hollywood as a source for programming. An alliance with ABC, then barely escaping creditors, had hardly appealed to the larger studios, despite Kintner's spirited overtures. UPT's greater financial resources and industry connections made

ABC a more effective suitor. Walt Disney was interested—and had extensive negotiations with NBC. In the end, however, ABC had a deal. Disney agreed to produce a weekly program, *Disneyland*, which in turn garnered impressive ratings. It was ABC's only show to place in the Nielsen top ten in 1954–55 and 1955–56.

Disney did not simply enter program production. The company used *Disneyland* as a promotional platform for its other enterprises. Indeed, the historian Christopher Anderson estimated that about one-third of each sixty-minute *Disneyland* episode consisted of product promotion. Episodes of *Disneyland* previewed forthcoming feature films like *20,000 Leagues under the Sea*. Industry insiders attributed *20,000 Leagues*'s impressive box office to *Disneyland*'s advance work. The program similarly heralded Disney's new theme park in Orange County, California, from which the program took its title. "When the industry was cussing television and trying to ignore it," Disney's brother remarked, "Walt moved in and worked with it and made it work for him."[86]

Disney's strategy encouraged three larger film companies, Warner Brothers, MGM, and 20th Century Fox, to enter TV. Producing prime-time entertainment was secondary. "Their overriding motive," writes Anderson, "was to publicize themselves and their new theatrical releases before a nationwide audience." Warner Brothers agreed to do an hour-length series, *Warner Brothers Presents*, for ABC in early 1955. Warners would engage in television production, studio head Jack L. Warner confessed, "only to secure advertisements through television."[87] Individual episodes of *Warner Brothers Presents*, a publicist announced, "will exceed many times their selling price—as with the *Disneyland* TV films—since Warner's will benefit from the promotion afforded by the program."[88] Specifically, *Warner Brothers Presents* included "Behind the Cameras" plugs for forthcoming studio pictures.

At the same time, Warners promised to bring big-screen production values and properties to the newest medium. (Disney, it should be noted, was a relatively small studio in the mid–1950s.) *Warner Brothers Presents* rotated three hour-long series based on the feature films *King's Row*, *Casablanca*, and *Cheyenne*. Warners regarded each as an established "franchise," thus "taking advantage," a network official wrote, "of the 'marquee value' and 'familiarity factor' the success of these pictures had won in the public mind."[89]

Warner Brothers Presents failed to match *Disneyland*'s initial success. The selection of series was questionable in that two of the films had

been released thirteen years earlier. The first episodes disappointed critics and the network. After several weeks, ABC president Robert E. Kintner wrote, two sponsors concluded that *Warner Brothers Presents* "has nowhere near reached its true potential."[90] Only one of the series, *Cheyenne*, a Western, developed a following. The studio found TV production vexing. Producers had great difficulty adapting to the new medium's strict time limits. A feature film, after all, did not *have* to run so many minutes. Moreover, the program's promotion of Warners features was far more transparent and off-putting than Disney's. Even several sponsors objected to the practice. Unlike Warners and others, *Advertising Age* observed, Disney "understands the TV audience and puts his shows together so that the Disney plugs don't seem to grate." And Warners had to reckon with the expectations problem. Trying too hard to control expenses, the Warners programs often looked and sounded cheap. "Some slick stuff was shot," *Ad Age* wrote of *Warner Brothers Presents*, "but it lacks the touch that made Warner an important studio."[91]

Even more muddled was MGM's entry. Again came the trap of expectations. MGM had been the nation's foremost filmmaker. "MGM will bring to television," ABC chairman Leonard Goldenson commented, "an outstanding program consistent with its reputation."[92] Debuting on ABC in September 1955, *MGM Parade* at first consisted of nothing more than scenes from the MGM lot, as well as clips of old and forthcoming films. Actor George Murphy, assisted by the MGM lion puppet, hosted the program. It was a lame, thirty-minute infomercial. *Advertising Age* pulled no punches. "So far, it's a mess. Good old film clips with no continuity, no direction, no taste, too many 'so what' plugs for M-G-M."[93] In June 1956, a J. Walter Thompson agent advised a client against sponsoring an MGM-produced series. "It was our feeling," he wrote, "that—since *MGM Parade* had not been well handled—this studio should not be considered further."[94]

The next month, another major studio, 20th Century Fox, entered prime time. *The 20th Century-Fox Hour* appeared every other week on CBS. It offered hour-long filmed dramas, many based on old Fox films, and included plugs of forthcoming features. Like *MGM Parade*, *The 20th Century-Fox Hour* failed to find an audience. 20th Century Fox had better luck with the more modestly promoted half-hour series about a girl and her horse, *My Friend Flicka*.[95]

Despite such shaky starts—Warners, 20th Century Fox, and MGM all lost money in their first year of television production—none of the

studios turned back. They had reconciled themselves to television. In fact, by mid–1956, all the filmmakers had committed themselves to producing series.[96] At the same time, they began selling or syndicating their attractive inventory of theatrical films. MGM alone offered some 770 features. These were eagerly sought by TV stations, especially those lacking a network affiliation and in dire need of attractive programming. NBC's Robert Sarnoff, for one, worried in late 1956 that some affiliates might run recent feature films instead of network programming. In fact, NTA (National Telefilm Associates), which began purchasing feature films for video syndication, found affiliates more interested in carrying the films later in the evening, after the networks' prime-time schedule. Although the networks resisted for several years airing feature films in prime time, CBS paid MGM $1 million for the rights to telecast the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz* once a year for four years.[97]

Why did the major studios agree to enter television production? TV, after all, had come to be regarded as the single most powerful factor behind the declining motion picture box office. "Motion picture theatre audiences are way off," Jack Warner wrote Gary Cooper in October 1955, "and everyone attributes it to television."[98]

Three considerations caused the Hollywood conversion. First, the promotional possibilities plainly intrigued the larger studios (and placated theater owners displeased by the studios' entry into TV). Network radio in the 1930s, despite concerns that it curtailed filmgoing, had similarly come to be regarded as a means of publicizing individual features and stars. Imploring Cooper to appear on "Behind the Cameras," Warner wrote, "we are reaching many, many millions of viewers every Tuesday night with our television show. I am positive you know the importance of reaching the public today in every shape, form and manner to sell our pictures."[99] As both Warners and MGM quickly learned, however, only Disney proved able to use its own program as an effective promotional platform. After 1956, film producers looked to other TV programs, including talk and variety shows, as publicity vehicles.

Second, by the mid–1950s, no one in Hollywood could dismiss television as a fad. More and more American homes had televisions, and viewing hours had not, contrary to some expectations, declined. Average household television use actually increased between 1950 and 1955.[100] People had not returned to the movie theater. Most remained home watching TV. Admitted Jack Warner, "We can't assume that television

is going to blow over."[101] In early 1955, one Detroit theater owner, whose colleagues had funded a survey several years earlier that suggested that TV owners would take up moviegoing again, had installed a set in his lobby. "An escape hatch," a reporter wagged, "if the second feature gets dull."[102]

Finally, motion picture making had changed in ways that encouraged television production. Simply put, the larger studios had stabilized their financial situation. They had cut costs while revising their marketing strategy. Fewer features were made. More revenues were invested in a smaller number of A features, more often in color and Cinemascope. Producing fewer but presumably more attractive films allowed the studios to increase admission prices (and augmented their leverage with newly independent exhibitors).[103] At the same time, the enhanced A films possessed production values that the networks were hard-pressed to match. Even Weaver could not part the Red Sea, as Cecil B. DeMille did in *The Ten Commandments* (1956). "You give 'em a good show," one executive declared, "they'll come to see it."[104]

The "blockbuster" strategy made television attractive for several reasons. The reduction in output left studio space (and remaining contract players) underutilized—and available for television work. Then, too, as Christopher Anderson noted, television could protect against the hazards of a blockbuster emphasis. At a given moment, assets might be tied up in several hoped for hits like *The Spirit of St. Louis* and *Giant.* Such expectations might be misplaced, as Warners found with *The Spirit of St. Louis.* ("I have never been able to figure out why it flopped," Jack Warner later wrote.) Under the old order, the studios could count on a predictable flow of revenues from a range of features. Producing a smaller number of films made cash flow harder to forecast. Television production would generate revenues between hits while compensating for features that died at the box office.[105]

That said, the larger studios had trouble mastering the economics of television. Having mocked the networks' productions, the larger film companies grossly (and arrogantly) underestimated the demands of TV. Warners, MGM, and others invested too little in their first TV ventures and, as a result, risked damaging their brands. Their video product could look threadbare. Relatedly, they did not appreciate TV's potential for revenues. With the exception of Columbia's Screen Gems, none understood that a filmed series might lose money during its first, network telecast, but that profits, sometimes substantial, could be re-

covered when it was rerun. Instead, Warners, MGM, and 20th Century Fox tried too hard to control expenditures, producing series that failed to capture viewers and create a market for secondary airing. Worse, the studios' first hour-long programs consisted of forty-minute dramas accompanied by features promoting current releases. A forty-minute drama could not be syndicated. Finally, none of the studios realized how valuable their inventory of feature films would prove to be. Most preferred a short-term cash sale to retaining control.[106]

The studios' halfhearted engagement in television further limited their ability to profit from the newest medium. The largest film companies still regarded TV production as secondary to the making of feature films. This lack of enthusiasm showed in the problems several studios encountered trying to produce television series. Jack L. Warner admitted to unhappy sponsors that *Warner Brothers Presents* suffered from a restricted budget.[107] "Hollywood in its first year on television," wrote one Kodak vice president, "has not justified the confidence that was placed in its motion picture craftsmen, as far as television product is concerned. They have tended generally to treat television as an annoying stepchild."[108]

Most of what came off the studios' assembly line, as Weaver and others had feared, were not A pictures but sixty- or thirty-minute B films, commonly a second feature on a double billing or screened in smaller, marginal movie houses. Of Screen Gems, *Advertising Age* remarked, "its approach was businesslike: use studio facilities, top talent and make good Grade B movies for TV."[109] *Rin Tin Tin* had been a B movie staple beginning in the 1920s, then a radio serial. *Cheyenne* was not *High Noon* or *Shane*, critically well-received feature films. It more closely resembled the departing B picture. Hurriedly made, B films preferred melodrama to drama, farce to comedy. Although most were forgettable exercises, some B pictures were well crafted. And a studio TV series could similarly overcome the odds. Warners' *Maverick* was well cast and cleverly written, possessing a sense of humor absent in most adult Westerns. One episode dared to satirize *Gunsmoke*.[110] More often, however, the studio series dismayed critics. The studios, they averred, were serving viewers leftovers. In his review of *King's Row*, the Philadelphia TV critic Bob Williams accused Warners of transforming an A property, the original film, into a B feature. *King's Row* "consisted of a Warner Brothers soap opera company presentation of an episode which inflicted great dishonor on a Warner-produced film of a decade or so

ago." Williams savaged the "ghastly low budget B pictures—the kind they couldn't drag folks [in to] watch, once the television age dawned, even with offers of free trips to the moon and a promise that the buxom blonde star would sit on dad's lap the next time she was in town. Now they evidently plan to hurl the same rejected, moth-eaten scraps into the living rooms. Televiewers, we believe, have seen enough good drama in the last few years to recognize dishwater when they see it."[111] Reviewing the premiere of Warners' detective series *Bourbon Street Beat* in September 1959, *Variety* concluded that the "leadoff script was a ragout of 'B' picture ingredients."[112]

With the B picture the industry standard for television, the studios had no special advantage. Smaller companies, like Desilu, proved to be more than capable of producing filmed series, and became the major suppliers of TV programming. Desilu moved into making action programs, notably one of ABC's biggest hits, *The Untouchables*, about Treasury Department agents during Prohibition. In June 1957, *Life* magazine reported, Desilu shot more film for television than MGM, once the nation's largest studio, did for feature films. Indeed, not until the early 1960s did MGM have much success producing TV programs.[113]

Among those seizing on the entrepreneurial model was the actor Dick Powell. Originally cast in musicals, Powell had reinvented his screen image by playing the hard-boiled private detective Philip Marlowe in *Murder, My Sweet* (1945). By the early 1950s, however, Powell's cinematic prospects were beyond reinvention. He could still secure supporting roles in major features, but his status as a star—with his name above the title—had all but ended. In his late forties in 1952, Powell chose to enter television production. Together with several fellow film actors, Powell formed Four Star Productions, which produced a half-hour filmed series, *Four Star Playhouse*, in which they rotated star turns. "I like it," Powell said of doing television in 1954. "Keeps me in the public eye." After several years, Four Star began producing more series. Powell exercised the greatest control. "Most of Four-Star's 10-year history," a trade journalist wrote in 1962, "has been a Dick Powell production." He hosted and frequently appeared in a Western anthology, *Dick Powell's Zane Grey Theater*. An alliance with the William Morris talent agency greatly eased casting possibilities. By 1960, Four Star was one of the four largest producers of television programs and had taken over the moribund Republic Studios. By combining his skills as an actor and his entrepreneurial instincts as a producer, Powell, Chris-

tine Becker wrote, was arguably one of "the most successful film star[s] of his stature on fifties television."[114]

An even more successful entrant into filmed programming was MCA. The huge talent agency formed its own production unit, Revue. MCA-Revue was well positioned to be a major player in TV. Having become the largest talent agency, MCA could persuade many of its clients to appear in Revue Productions, and at a reasonable fee. But the company's move only came after the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) granted MCA a waiver in 1952, permitting the agency to produce TV series in which SAG members appeared.[115] MCA also purchased smaller production units, like Jack Webb's Mark VII, which produced *Dragnet* and other NBC series. *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* was an MCA property. A carefully managed enterprise, MCA experienced none of the cost-containment struggles that initially beset the larger studios. In fact, cost efficiency, and not quality (with the striking exception of the Hitchcock series), defined Revue programs. "Aesthetic quality has never been a primary consideration of the production end of MCA," the journalist Nat Hentoff observed.[116] MCA would not brook interference from sponsors or the network. MCA, an advertising agent observed, was "not an easy group to deal with. They normally jealously retain program control of their packages."[117]

MCA's advantages and approach could be seen in its first big video success, *This Is Your Life*. The series concept had been offered to NBC by Ralph Edwards, who had developed and hosted several popular radio programs and the hit TV show *Truth or Consequences*. On *This Is Your Life*, an unsuspecting celebrity would have his story "told" by Edwards, who introduced various acquaintances from the individual's past. There were often awkward, discomforting moments. Few had expected the series to become a hit. Indeed, though agreeing to carry the program, NBC had refused to help Edwards with the production costs. The host had found a partner in MCA, which in turn cajoled clients to appear on Edwards's program, thus boosting its prospects of drawing viewer interest.[118]

NBC proved more enthusiastic about MCA when Kintner joined the network in 1957. Frantically trying to salvage NBC's position, Kintner, much as he had at ABC, turned to Hollywood. MCA, promising lower costs than its largest rivals, was an attractive supplier and was soon producing much of NBC's prime-time schedule. *Fortune* magazine reported (and Kintner subsequently denied) that in 1957 the NBC

executive literally gave MCA's Sonny Werblin various time slots to fill, sometimes without having seen the pilots. Kintner's faith in MCA was hardly misplaced. Revue produced two of NBC's most popular series of the late 1950s, *Wagon Train* and *Tales of Wells Fargo.* All three networks carried MCA programs. During the 1959–60 season, MCA produced or coproduced sixteen prime-time series, more than any other company.[119]

Talent: The Lost Tribe

Until Hollywood became the center of television production, it appeared that network television would encourage original dramas, most telecast live and produced in New York. When he got out of the air force, John Frankenheimer went to Hollywood to secure a job with a network. NBC offered him a position as a parking lot attendant; CBS, in the mail room. He traveled to New York. There he went to work on the weekly, thirty- or sixty-minute anthology dramas on all the networks.[120] Although some anthologies, like *Lights Out* (knocked off the air by *I Love Lucy*), were thematically tied to mystery and crime, others were not.

There was every expectation that in some form the anthology drama would be a permanent part of the television schedule. The anthology program had been a network radio staple. Large corporations like U.S. Steel, Alcoa, and Armstrong Tile were willing to be sole sponsors. Such programs were thought to possess a prestige other types of TV fare—the comic variety show or situation comedy—lacked. Anthologies aspired to the standards of the legitimate theater, not vaudeville or Hollywood.[121]

The anthology at first enjoyed respectable ratings. The very first, *The Kraft Television Theatre*, which premiered on NBC in May 1947, had a strong early following. In February 1948, an agent with J. Walter Thompson, which handled the Kraft account, dropped in on a Bronx bar and requested that the TV be tuned to the program. A vote was taken, with *Kraft* defeating basketball 15 to 3. "These men were a pretty rough sort," the Thompson newsletter reported, "but they were completely fascinated by the program and even the negative voters were finally won over."[122] During the 1950–51 season, *Kraft* was one of seven anthologies to finish in the Nielsen's twenty-five most popular series. Five were aired live and two on film. An early 1952 New York City survey indicated that 86 percent of those polled regularly viewed the

anthologies; a third reported watching four to six anthologies a week. But their popularity was in part explained by the absence of competition and their favorable placement on the schedule. Berle's many viewers, NBC's own research suggested, created a large audience flow for *Fireside Theatre*.[123] The anthologies' ability to compete with more popular genres of television declined over time. Five anthologies ranked in the Nielsen top twenty-five in 1951–52; only three placed during the 1952–53 season. Four finished in the top twenty-five the following season. But by 1954–55, only three anthologies were among the Nielsen leaders, and all three were shot mainly in Hollywood.[124] Indeed, the single most popular anthology program between 1950 and 1955 was the filmed *Fireside Theatre*. It was commonly considered the least daring, most conventional of the anthologies. *Fireside Theatre*, remarked *TV Guide*, offered "no attempt at artiness, profundity, or significance."[125]

In that regard, critics played favorites. The filmed anthologies rarely impressed them nearly so much as the New York–based, live originations. They carried, after all, the affectation of theater; and anthologies like *Fireside Theatre*, the predictability of Hollywood. One advertiser, noting negative notices for another filmed anthology, referred in early 1956 to "the normal antipathy of East Coast newspaper TV critics to film television."[126]

Several generalizations about the live anthologies, aside from their uneven quality, are possible. They were inexpensive. "The singularly distinguishing feature of television drama in those early days," remarked the writer Rod Serling, "was a paucity of payment, sets, and theme."[127] A director of *The Kraft Television Theatre* estimated that each hour-long teleplay, even cast with "people of recognizable stature," cost an average of sixteen thousand dollars.[128] In September 1953, an NBC executive privately referred to *Armstrong Circle Theatre* as an "unpretentious, cheap show. There has never been any attempt at fine writing or experimenting with the dramatic form." Weaver himself admonished Armstrong to invest more in the program. "It is desirable to change to a more powerful audience attraction," he wrote General Sarnoff, "or at least to increase the talent budget of the Armstrong show enough to give it real story impact and high marquee value."[129]

More successful anthologies, that is, the ones that generated the most critical attention, had strong-willed producers. So much about live television called for a forceful leader: the restricted budgets and studio space, finding or adapting suitable material, and staging a show

in real time. Three producers proved up to the challenge: Worthington Miner, Albert McCleery, and Fred Coe. All three men had backgrounds in the theater. Miner was a fifteen-year Broadway veteran when he came to Columbia. Coe had directed community theater, an apprenticeship especially suited to the staging of the intimate stories that he preferred to stage on television.[130] Although McCleery never matched Coe's or Miner's fame, he may have been the greatest innovator. On *Cameo Theatre* for NBC in 1950, he developed the "cameo technique." It well demonstrated how network television's initially tight resources inspired skillful and economical improvisation. Telecast in the round, the Cameo technique negated the need for props and scenery. McCleery relied on intense close-ups. When the actress Nina Foch did a McCleery production, Harriet Van Horne wrote, "she got more close-ups in twenty-seven minutes on television than she'd had in her last two [motion] pictures."[131]

Other anthologies did not have to have a McCleery, Coe, or Miner in command to mount a memorable show.[132] *The Kraft Television Theatre* presented Rod Serling's first critical hit, *Patterns*, in 1955. "This is one of those rare shows in which everything worked out exactly right," Crosby wrote, "and in live television that is not only a matter of skill but of great good luck."[133] Watching the *Patterns* cast in New York rehearse an unprecedented second live telecast, Hal Humphrey, TV critic for the *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, abandoned his normal partiality toward West Coast television. "There is one phase of TV in which this town excels over Hollywood, hands down and no argument, and that is [the] 'live' drama show. They have a touch here. Maybe it's the background of the New York stage, or simply the tempo of the town. What[ever] it is, Hollywood hasn't found it," Humphrey wrote. "Three TV cameras were poised around a conference table scene near the beginning and the live editing done by the director in his control booth was as fine as one would see done in any movie."[134]

When anthologies first went on the air in 1948 and 1949, producers, not unlike their colleagues elsewhere, looked for the tried and true. They wanted to adapt established literary properties for the home screen. But they soon discovered that the motion picture studios had bought the rights to virtually all desirable books and plays, rights they extended to kinescope distribution.[135] Video producers found themselves reviving some very old chestnuts. *Kraft* purchased the rights to *At Mrs. Bean's* for fifty dollars; it had lasted for twenty performances

in 1904. Some experimented with abbreviated Shakespeare. For CBS's *Studio One*, Worthington Miner produced a well-regarded, modern-dress version of *Julius Caesar.* Although Miner cut much of the play's poetry, he daringly upset the standard, heroic view of Marc Antony.[136]

By the early 1950s, anthology producers began looking for new material. Coe of NBC commissioned dramas based on the lives of Vincent van Gogh and others. A January 1951 production based on the Allied POW escape from a German prison camp, *The Great Escape*, received positive reviews. Coe by then realized that talented authors, often unknown, could be found to fashion original teleplays. He had the good fortune to be operating in a city teeming with aspiring young playwrights who would accept fairly modest fees. Serling, for example, received $700 for two scripts in 1953, $1,250 for another in 1954, and twice that amount, after a huge critical success, a year later.[137] TV work paid the rent and subsidized their grand designs. "If I could make a living, no matter how meager, writing for television," Tad Mosel confessed, "it would give me time and opportunity to write The Great American Play."[138]

The anthology writers shared other characteristics. They were white, nearly all male, and in their late twenties and thirties. Most had served in the military during World War II. Two of the most celebrated—Paddy Chayefsky and Rod Serling—had been wounded in action. Their wartime experiences, like those of many combat soldiers of a certain sensitivity, left them deeply skeptical of authority. In Chayefsky's case, it simply reinforced a lifelong nonconformity. Serling never truly recovered from the horrors of fighting in the Philippines. He actually began writing in college after the war as a form of therapy. His military experience in turn inspired many of his plays but haunted his sleep and fostered a self-destructive lifestyle that took him to an early grave.[139]

Anthology writers shared a role model in Arthur Miller. He was the "older brother," a few years senior to most of the TV playwrights and a one-time author of radio plays. Miller had established himself on Broadway in the late 1940s. His *Death of a Salesman* had a special effect on many of the budding playwrights. The tragedy of an aging, middle-class man became a painful exploration of human failings and aspirations. Chayefsky wept uncontrollably after seeing the play. Miller's drama greatly moved Rod Serling, who never had the theatrical ambitions of his peers. "No play had ever struck him with searing force both emotionally and intellectually," his biographer Joel Engel found. "Maybe he would be another Arthur Miller."[140]

The TV writers, however, carried their admiration for Miller only so far. As Kenneth Hey noted in a penetrating essay on the 1950s teleplay, they avoided the "despairing fatalism" that denoted Miller's work. "Only in a very marginal and oblique way," wrote another analyst of the TV dramas, "do Serling and Chayefsky challenge the values we are told we live by." Where Miller's protagonists—as well as those of Tennessee Williams—possessed many, sometimes fatal, shortcomings, television's playwrights were more likely to treat their lead characters with sympathy. They were struggling to achieve an identity and self-respect. That conflict might encompass family or work or a specific problem like alcoholism.[141] When dealing with the decade's numbing conformity, the novelist and screenwriter Ring Lardner Jr. complained in a 1955 review, characters ultimately accepted social or corporate demands, no matter how suffocating.[142]

The relative caution of TV dramas was not necessarily explained by their underwriters, at least not at first. Many anthology advertisers originally gave Coe and others a relatively free hand. "Our sponsors," Coe wrote in mid–1954, "have always been co-operative, we have never been afraid to experiment with [different] types of stories and types of productions."[143] Kraft's vice president for broadcasting would not read scripts of pending *Kraft Theatres.* "What am I reading scripts for?" he told one director. "I'm not a showman."[144] For a moment, the director Fielder Cook recalled, "programming belonged not to the sellers and packagers and dealers but to the showmen."[145]

Although complaints about the sponsor grew over time, TV's anthology authors convinced themselves that their medium would have a place for culturally ambitious drama. The future cheered the novelist Gore Vidal, who wrote for Coe and others. "The Golden Age for the dramatist is at hand," he wrote in 1956. "There is so much air to be illustrated, so many eyes watching, so much money to be spent, so many fine technicians and interpreters at one's command, that the playwright cannot but thrive."[146] Rod Serling saw nearly as much promise. "The heartening thing," he commented in 1957, "is that there are still things to strive for."[147]

Critics and others reinforced this giddy mood. The morning after the telecast of *Patterns*, John Crosby wrote, Serling "woke up famous—just like Lord Byron after 'Childe Harold.'"[148] Harcourt, Brace announced plans to publish the best television plays. "Our sponsorship of this project," an editor explained, "stems from the belief that tele-

vision, now undeniably a force in American culture, is in the future certain to become an important creative form."[149] The leading cultural critic Gilbert Seldes ranked the hour-long teleplays and some live news coverage as two of the "most honorable accomplishments of television." The anthologies "resemble one another, particularly in being uneven in quality from week to week, but rarely falling below a reasonably high level." *Life* magazine went further, declaring that "if William Shakespeare were alive today he might well be writing for television."[150]

For all the critical applause, the anthology authors had to accept the medium's limitations. Time was the cruelest taskmaster: fifty-two minutes for an hour-long show. (Most of Shakespeare's plays, as Miner acknowledged, could not be effectively condensed into sixty-minute playlets.)[151] Coe's authors attended rehearsals partly out of necessity. If a teleplay ran over, something had to go. "If the writer has to cut five minutes," Chayefsky confessed, "he simply cuts it, or someone else will cut it for him."[152] "In no other writing form," Serling observed, "is the author so fettered by the clock." Dramatic flow had to allow for two commercial breaks in a half-hour show, and three in an hour play. Moreover, live telecasts restricted costume and makeup changes (some of which went awry anyway) between scenes. The small studios in New York further limited what could be staged. "We had to be intimate," Serling wrote. "We didn't have room to be anything else."[153]

Writers adapted by emphasizing certain types of stories. Conveniently, for the purposes of television, plays imitating *Death of a Salesman* were easy to stage. Human dramas about everyday life did not necessitate elaborate costuming or sets. There were exceptions. Attempts to produce Westerns were few and invited comic mishaps. After the dress rehearsal for one, two horses got loose and ran into Central Park.[154] Much more frequent were contemporary dramas. Reginald Rose's *Twelve Angry Men* took place in a jury room; no horses were needed. A *Studio One* story editor wrote Serling in mid–1954, "Fantasy in any form is out."[155]

Absent fantasy, teleplays commonly dealt with psychological struggles. "The personal drama," as *Philco-Goodyear Playhouse* director Delbert Mann preferred to label them, "focused down on intimate small stories that dealt with people in ordinary circumstances."[156] "There's nothing duller than rich people!" Coe proclaimed.[157] "I've been mainly concerned with relationships between parents and children," Robert Alan Aurthur commented.[158] The cramped studio space partly ex-

plained this emphasis on what came to be dubbed as "kitchen dramas." "You really had to limit yourself to one or two [sets]," Tad Mosel later explained. "The room in the house where most of the action took place was the kitchen. You could bring your actors in and out. Exteriors were next to impossible in live television. They just were never believable, so you avoided them."[159] In the opening stage directions to *My Lost Saints*, Mosel referred to the kitchen "where most of the play takes place." Much of the action in Horton Foote's *Young Lady of Property* occurred in a kitchen. "*Dissolve to: The kitchen. Minna is mixing some dough on the table. Miss Gert comes in the room.*"[160]

Chayefsky wrote the most honored personal drama, *Marty*, for Coe's *Philco Playhouse*. *Marty* concerned a lonely Bronx butcher, played by Rod Steiger. Living with his mother, Marty is unhappily single, a good person but overweight and plain. Nights out are spent with his pals. "What are we goin' to do tonight, Marty?" a friend asked. "I don't know, what do you wanna do tonight?" Marty meets a lonely woman at a dance hall for singles and against the counsel of his buddies—and his mother—decides to pursue the relationship as the teleplay ends. The simple story touched viewers, certainly those who knew the pains of being alone and of courtship. "'Marty' brought more phone calls and letters than any show we ever did," the director Delbert Mann recalled. "They were universally, 'My God, that's the story of my life. How could you have played it so truly?' People were crying on the phone." Steiger discovered the play's reach walking to a restaurant the next morning. The driver of a garbage truck cried out, "What are we goin' to do tonight, Marty?" His waitress posed the same question.[161]

An independent company operated by Harold Hecht and the actor Burt Lancaster was sufficiently impressed to produce a motion picture adaptation of *Marty*. Chayefsky expanded his original script and Delbert Mann was hired to direct. A young character actor, Ernest Borgnine, played the lead. The project then almost collapsed. A Hecht-Lancaster Western, *Vera Cruz*, thought to have far greater box office potential, was running over budget. *Marty* was nearly dropped to cover *Vera Cruz*'s cost overruns. At the last minute, Hecht-Lancaster agreed to complete *Marty*. It commanded impressive reviews and Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, and Best Screenplay. Accepting his award, Chayefsky was uncharacteristically speechless.[162]

The success of *Marty* carried a price. Chayefsky had more than met Coe's aspirations for live television drama. But the high standard proved

difficult to maintain. No author, not even one possessed of Chayefsky's limitless self-assurance, could craft memorable scripts every few weeks or months. Serling faced the same dilemma. Reviewers awaited another Serling teleplay as impressive as *Patterns*.[163] "We do fifty-two plays a year," the writer Robert Alan Aurthur remarked, "and we know perfectly well they won't all be triumphs. We'd rather have our failures represent writers' experiments, things we risked, than do formula shows."[164]

Inconsistency, if essentially unavoidable, risked alienating viewers. The weekly dramatic or comedy series offered product predictability. Anthology producers were essentially expecting set owners to invest an hour watching an original drama that *might* be *Patterns* or *Marty*. Or something tedious. More and more viewers decided to take the less risky course. They preferred programs with standard story lines and likable characters. Such shows were not likely to provide many psychological insights. But they would not disappoint viewers. Television "programs need characters the public can like," Desi Arnaz remarked in 1960. "That was the strength of *I Love Lucy.* It wasn't a great show, but we never did a bad one."[165] As Jack Benny had said of his hugely popular radio program, "We don't worry about the show being great—we just see that it isn't lousy."[166]

Although critics championed risk taking, many turned against the anthology drama. Mused *Variety* in July 1955, "The hour dramatics, it's the growing feeling, are currently at a new high in quantity and a new low in quality."[167] Lawrence Laurent, TV columnist for the *Washington Post*, later wondered if live TV drama's similarity to the legitimate theater confused his colleagues. "Many television critics," Laurent wrote, "tried to evaluate live TV drama by the same standards they would have used for the legitimate theater. Such standards, failing as they must to account for [the] limitations of the medium—small screen, chronic precision, financial restrictions—were unfair to television. They failed to take into account, also, its particular magic of immediacy and ubiquity. They failed to give enough credit to topical values, contemporary problems of our society, and to the excitement that attends watching a performance as it is given."[168]

No critic of influence struck a greater blow than Jack Gould of the *New York Times.* In a long August 1955 essay, Gould offered an uncharacteristically scathing critique. "A great deal of television drama is sick," he wrote. "Too many original dramas presented at choice evening hours are nothing more than dreary true confessions wired for sight

and sound." He compared many of the hour dramas to the infamous and depressing soap operas. Too many dealt with "The Little Person in a Little Job in a Little Office who lives in a Little Home with a Little Wife and Little Children. He lives in a Little Neighborhood where there are Little Minds." Something had to change. "TV's neuropsychological kick is getting to be a big bore," he wrote. "It's getting to the point where amateur psychiatry threatens to supplant professional playwriting."[169] The novelist Vance Bourjaily later bitterly blamed Gould in part for the genre's demise.[170]

Sponsors also started disrupting the anthology's production process. The success of *Marty* caused more advertisers to take note of their properties. At the same time, the rising cost of sponsorship—and the increase in the size of the television audience—prompted advertisers to involve themselves more directly with the programs. "They began to send guys from the advertising agency," recalled director Arthur Penn, "to start interfering with the scripts and with the casting."[171]

Both NBC and Columbia tried to fend off the nagging patron. Weaver's solution was a dramatic anthology "spectacular," *Producer's Showcase*, beginning in the fall of 1955. It had multiple sponsors; with authority so divided, the producer's authority was seemingly reasserted. CBS developed a similar concept with *Playhouse 90* a year later.[172]

Playhouse 90 proved the lone anthology to survive the decade, though it took more than its share of critical lumps. Writers delighted in the added time—72 instead of 48 or 52 minutes—for their work. It was, Bourjaily wrote, "the last, harassed rallying point for the fine intentions of the early television dramatists."[173] Crosby termed *Playhouse 90* "a cultural treasure that the whole nation might one day be proud of possessing." Yet Crosby confessed to finding some productions uneven: "It's had its bad moments (as has the *Comedie Francaise)* but it's had its great ones." CBS executive Hubbell Robinson later insisted that "over the three years it was a regular weekly feature, [*Playhouse 90*] received more unfavorable than favorable reviews."[174]

In its last seasons, *Playhouse 90* lost some of its theatrical qualities. More productions were filmed or videotaped. Some anthology veterans believed CBS's decision to originate the program from Los Angeles affected the tone. "The whole atmosphere was different," commented one actress. "In New York, there was always a sense that what was important was the work and the performance. Out there, the hair and the lighting [were] the most important."[175] At the same time, CBS tried to

control costs and creative daring. A bitter John Houseman complained, "I came out to do six *Playhouse 90*'s and did four; they were all right but suffered under the austerity and timidity prevailing at CBS."[176]

Columbia, as was its custom, was responding to the market. Its declining support for *Playhouse 90* reflected a realization that viewer preference for anthologies fell as television entered more American homes. When NBC telecast *Marty*, approximately four out of every ten homes had televisions. Three years later, just over three-fourths of all homes had one or more sets. The newest medium's diffusion was most pronounced in the less densely populated sections of the country. According to the Nielsen Television Index, in 1955, televisions were twice as likely to be in the homes of Americans living in the twenty-five largest metropolitan areas as those in smaller C and D counties. Five years later, that gap had narrowed to 93 to 78 percent. A comparable disparity in television penetration in southern and northeastern homes had similarly approached closure by 1960.[177]

This trend could have been foreseen. *Kraft Television Theatre*'s average ratings dropped from 31.4 in 1950–51 to 25.9 in 1954–55 to 16.5 in 1957–58. *Kraft*'s "strength in terms of audience size and share [has] been in an almost continual decline for at least three to four years," observed a J. Walter Thompson analyst early in 1958, adding that "the problems with which Kraft is being faced are being felt generally by all hour dramatic anthologies." Kraft dropped the program that fall.[178] The film version of *Marty* had forecast this fate. Although *Marty* had enjoyed a strong run in New York, when released to other cities, a company publicist admitted, the feature "fell right on its ass." Indeed, Lancaster's Western, *Vera Cruz*, the unexpected costs of which had almost killed *Marty*, enjoyed twice the box office of Chayefsky's play. Subsequent film adaptations of TV plays fared worse.[179]

The anthology producers and writers failed to realize that the television audience was changing and, in relative terms at least, declining. Some continued to write and produce plays as if time had stopped in 1953, as if the garbage truck driver and waitress whom Steiger encountered the morning after *Marty* was telecast were still representative viewers. They were not. "The live television shows," recalled one director, "were directed and produced by people who were out of touch with the growing audience."[180]

The expanding television audience did not in and of itself explain the demise of the anthologies. Although produced in New York, the

anthologies did not pretend New York was America. At least not all of the time. Chayefsky's teleplays usually took place in one of the five boroughs. But Horton Foote's dramas normally had southern locations (Coe termed him "a Chekhov of the Texas small town"); Tad Mosel's dramas often occurred in his native Midwest. Coe, who was born in Alligator, Mississippi, had grown up in Nashville and been a community theater director in Columbia, South Carolina.[181]

The anthology had in fact been undergoing a transformation from 1955 to 1957. Fewer and fewer dramas involved families (in their kitchens). Despite Houseman's grousing, both NBC and CBS had invested more in their TV dramas than they had in the past. More money was being spent on the rights to established work. NBC poured considerable resources into a May 1955 version of Robert E. Sherwood's play *The Petrified Forest*, starring the major Hollywood stars Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, and Henry Fonda. ("If you didn't believe Bogart was the biggest star in the world," Tad Mosel, who adapted the play, remembered, "he would tell you so.") Moving more production west permitted performers like Bogart to appear in TV plays. Although Columbia scrimped on casting, it invested some three hundred thousand dollars in 1959 in a two-part version of Ernest Hemingway's Spanish Civil War novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls.* Hemingway preferred it to the lavish 1943 film, telling the writer who had written the adaptation that the TV play was a "damned sight better than the movie."[182]

At the same time, the anthologies assumed a different look. TV dramas initially were little more than telecasts of stage plays with some close-ups. They were "photographed stage performances," Mosel recalled. But, as Michael Kerbel noted in his analysis of twenty-four TV dramas, directors by the mid–1950s, led by John Frankenheimer, were becoming more resourceful with camera setups and movements. Visually, TV dramas increasingly resembled feature films. *Kraft* in 1956 did a production based on Walter Lord's book about the sinking of the *Titanic*, *A Night to Remember.* The teleplay used 107 actors, thirty-one sets, and seven cameras.[183]

The anthology's mourners could and did point to ABC. Although the upstart network had aired some anthologies in the early 1950s, it based its growth strategy on its alliances with Disney and Warner Brothers. In setting the prime-time schedule, Oliver Treyz, the network president between 1957 and 1962, deliberately targeted the anthology dramas. He understood their fragile ratings. Like Serling's

protagonist in *Requiem for a Heavyweight*, they were boxers who had fought too many rounds. In the fall of 1959, Treyz slated the violent series about Prohibition agents, *The Untouchables*, against *Playhouse 90*. *The Untouchables* proved especially popular in larger urban markets like Boston and Buffalo where the theatrical aspirations of *Playhouse 90* had relatively greater appeal than elsewhere. *Playhouse 90* soon left the air. "The audience turned its back on it," Stanton remarked. "The fatigue factor. Television wears out ideas and men faster than anything."[184]

In the late 1950s, one anthology drama continued to enjoy viewer favor, despite the increase in audience size. *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* finished twelfth in 1957–58 and twenty-fourth in 1958–59. Although the droll British director's video survival was modest when compared to some other CBS properties, the popularity of his show, together with that of CBS's *Millionaire*, strongly suggested that a successful anthology had to be thematic. Hitchcock's stories nearly always involved crime. "One of television's greatest contributions," he famously remarked, "was that it brought murder back into the home, where it belongs." His program paid partial homage to the habit principle while allowing the producers to encourage the higher writing and production standards associated with the older anthologies. Despite being an MCA property, *Hitchcock* had many admirers.

The director had no difficulty adapting to TV's far tighter production schedule. He could shoot a one-hour program in six days, sometimes fewer. By comparison, he acknowledged, he required seven days to do the one-minute shower scene in *Psycho*. Hitchcock's TV show might lack his films' "imaginative direction," wrote one critic, but "the master considers television a medium of communication, not an art form."[185]

The veteran anthology writer Rod Serling created another successful thematic anthology for CBS, *The Twilight Zone*, which premiered in the fall of 1959. The writer oversaw production and wrote many of the early episodes. As a concession to the habit principle, however, the network insisted that the program have a regular narrator. This was in keeping with broadcast tradition; as Kenneth Hey noted, radio drama had frequently used a narrator. Casting one for Serling's program proved problematical. CBS and Serling considered Marvin Miller, who appeared on *The Millionaire*, as well as Orson Welles. At the last minute, Serling assumed the role himself, first doing a voice-over, then, after the first season, appearing on the air, like Hitchcock. And, as with

Hitchcock's program, the series attracted prominent as well as promising performers and directors.[186]

Although the characters and situations on *The Twilight Zone* changed every week, in each episode one or more protagonists entered a bizarre "fifth dimension." Plots frequently concerned confrontations with space aliens, the aftermath of a nuclear war, or a shift in time. Loyal viewers regarded *The Twilight Zone* as terrifically entertaining and did not always realize that Serling and the other writers often used the program to examine such contemporary issues as intolerance and conformity. "Serling had turned to science fiction," Steven D. Stark wrote, "primarily because it offered him more freedom to make statements about politics and social conditions."[187] One program even poked fun at the television Western, which had helped to end the live drama Serling revered. An actor portraying a TV gunslinger suddenly encounters a real life, nineteenth-century counterpart, who mocks his character.[188]

Two years later, in 1961, Columbia began airing *The Defenders*, an hour-long drama about the Prestons, a father-son team of attorneys, created by the anthology writer Reginald Rose. It represented, *Variety* observed, "a unique effort to combine the dramatic repertory programs of the 'Golden Age' with the basic qualities of the serials dominant these days." Rose based the series on his two-part 1957 *Studio One* teleplay. *The Defenders* was a more conventional dramatic series, "a stronger way to do general drama," commented one industry insider. CBS president James T. Aubrey spoke of *The Defenders* as a "new form." E. G. Marshall, a veteran anthology actor, played the father; Robert Reed was his son. The program allowed Rose and other writers to comment on controversial issues like the blacklist and abortion that comparable shows like *Perry Mason* consciously avoided. *The Defenders*, wrote an ACLU official, "features some pretty good civil liberties TV shows." Unlike Mason, they frequently lost in court. "The Prestons failed nearly as often as they succeeded in achieving their goals," wrote one student of the series. "What was essential was that they express their ideas to the viewer at home."[189]

Although CBS kept both programs on the air until the 1964–65 season, neither matched the popularity of *Hitchcock* or *The Millionaire*. *The Defenders* finished in the Nielsen top twenty-five only once, in 1962–63; *The Twilight Zone* never placed. Nonetheless, *The Twilight Zone* had a legion of fans and generated a large share of unnerving fan mail and

script submissions.[190] The series, like Gleason's *Honeymooners*, proved much more popular in syndication than anyone had anticipated. Serling had virtually given away the syndication rights to CBS.[191] Serling tried to adapt himself to the habit principle with a Western, *The Loner*. But the series, which debuted on CBS in 1965, proved more preachy than action-packed. The frequent moralizing on *The Twilight Zone* had been more discreet. *The Loner* left the air after one season. Serling contemplated reviving his once promising career. He never did.[192]

The Reconciliation

Much of the entertainment industry did a better job than Serling reconciling itself to changes in the rules of television. Most actors conceded to the habit principle and did weekly series. Benny waited until the 1960–61 season before agreeing to perform every seven days.[193] Bing Crosby and Jimmy Stewart agreed to star in weekly series, though the latter waited until 1971 before making the commitment. Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis each hosted variety programs in the 1960s.[194]

The relocation of the industry helped to hurry things. More and more program production originated in and around Hollywood. Between the summer of 1953 and fall of 1955, the number of ABC series produced in southern California rose from one (*The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*) to fourteen. CBS and NBC similarly boosted their West Coast originations. "Hollywood's television industry is literally bursting out at the seams," Cecil Smith of the *Los Angeles Times* reported.[195] ABC found the funds in 1957 to construct a twenty-three-acre, $30 million Television Center, while CBS expanded its Television City. Mayor Norman Poulson declared September 8–14, 1957, "Television Week." The City of Angels, the mayor proclaimed, "has become the television capital of the world."[196] By the decade's end, NBC, which had favored New York more than any other network earlier in the decade, carried only two evening prime-time programs, *Perry Como* and *The Price Is Right*, from the nation's largest city. "Today," wrote *Variety*'s George Rosen, "a live New York origination tailored specifically for TV is becoming an occasion for rejoicing."[197]

The critics, certainly those based on the East Coast, had always preferred New York over Los Angeles, and they regarded the relocation of production to California as a cultural disaster for the newest medium. Rosen concluded, "As television originations more and more vacate the New York premises for Hollywood-made films, thus continuing to take

up where the major pix studios' B pictures left off, the chances of embracing new forms of TV entertainment or anything remotely resembling live creativity grow slimmer and slimmer."[198]

But the East Coast bias was less absolute and less elitist than some detractors have assumed. For one thing, the critics did not oppose all West Coast productions. Certain Hollywood-fashioned series, notably *I Love Lucy* and *Maverick*, garnered praise. Rather, the prospect that virtually *no* prime-time entertainment programs would come from New York left them deeply distressed. For a short time, most critics imagined that television would borrow from many cultural institutions, the theater and performance hall as well as the film studio. One did not have to prefer riding a subway to driving, as Fred Allen did, to recognize New York's cultural advantages over southern California in 1950 or 1960. Los Angeles's edge was not cultural but economic. It had a larger pool of talent and a far superior capacity to mass-produce entertainment.

That capacity was invested in a relatively small number of program genres: situation comedies, Westerns, and detective dramas. All but absent was the anthology drama. "The programming became less ambitious," wrote Steven D. Stark.[199] The comedian and quizmaster Groucho Marx observed the transformation with a disgust surprising for a man whom television had enriched. Although like many show people Marx had never finished high school, he had cultural pretensions. He delighted in corresponding with T. S. Eliot. The narrowing of television upset Marx and fueled a misanthropy he carefully shielded from viewers. "It makes me laugh when I read Jack Gould, John Crosby, and all the other earnest 'uplifters,'" he wrote in February 1959. "No one gives a damn what they write. The air is now completely filled with cowboys, fertilizer and inanity. The country is full of jerks and they're now getting exactly what they deserve."[200]

8 The Patrons

We are in the advertising business.
Sylvester L. Weaver Jr., NBC, 1955

Commercial broadcasting was not imposed on a hapless people. Although a minority of listeners had organized to curb radio advertising, most Americans polled repeatedly indicated that they considered advertisements an acceptable, if occasionally annoying, price to pay for the American system of broadcasting. As a Montana electrician remarked in 1945, "I like the programs enough so I'll stand the advertising." One late 1940s survey indicated that only 20 percent favored a British system of paying an annual license fee rather than putting up with radio advertising. TV commercials received even less criticism, though they had their detractors. "It is quite true that television commercials as well as radio for that matter are irritating to a large number of people," wrote a prominent Philadelphian in 1953. Yet "without commercials one could hardly find the money to produce good entertainment." When offered educational service, free of the video pitchman, consumers routinely and overwhelmingly selected the commercial alternatives.[1]

This was no small concession. Sponsors' commercials were frequent and usually bereft of charm. Brand-name signage adorned a hundred sets. In exchange, true to the American system, the sponsor subsidized the programming of networks and stations. Awarding such power to the underwriter had profound effects on television, if not the viewer. The most controversial at the time concerned advertisers' involvement in production. When they were sole sponsors, many advertisers intrusively demanded changes in scripts, some controversial, others comical.

Product plugs could be relentless, especially on daytime programs that targeted children and housewives.

Nevertheless, advertising's impact on consumers was always subject to qualification, as opposed to its effects on the programs and practices of the newest medium. Advertisers' decisions determined which of the clashing programming philosophies of CBS and NBC would become the industry norm. Exaggerating only slightly, one bitter TV critic remarked in 1959, "Sponsors became the dictators of what we heard and saw."[2] Even more, they established industry structure. Their demand, or lack of demand, for TV would determine how the networks—and stations—operated.

O Pioneers!

Although some large companies coordinated their advertising, most preferred the convenience of having agencies handle their promotion. Some agencies developed budgets that included broadcast advertising. And well before the TV boom commenced in 1948, agencies weighed how the new technology might affect their work. Actors appeared in mock commercials, and the first TV stations allowed some experimentation. Various preliminary rules evolved. Warned *Printers' Ink* in 1944, "Wordy, drawn-out commercials should be avoided."[3]

The vast majority of advertisers would not be rushed. Although agencies closely monitored television's progress from 1946 to 1948, they were all too aware that television receiver sales were slight. Networks and stations commenced operations with much of their schedule unsold. Frequently the networks launched a series sans sponsorship, hoping that one or more underwriters might be found if the program won viewer interest. A few companies agreed to underwrite series, but usually below the costs incurred by the broadcaster. Networks could play on tradition in appealing to some potential underwriters. Because the razor manufacturer Gillette had sponsored the World Series on the radio, the company felt obligated to be the exclusive television sponsor of the fall classic in the late 1940s. Given the New York bias to set ownership, firms based in and around New York City had an additional incentive to try TV sponsorship. Standard Oil of New Jersey underwrote an early network newscast on NBC.[4]

The costs of sponsoring television programs were not great initially, certainly within the budgets of larger firms that were already spending

substantial sums on newspapers, magazines, and radio. For all of nine dollars, Bulova paid for the first television commercial in 1941 during a telecast of a Brooklyn Dodgers–Philadelphia Phillies game. The Texas Company sponsored television's most popular program in 1949, *The Texaco Star Theater*, yet its total network TV costs that year, $2.3 million, represented only 12.7 percent of its total advertising budget. Among TV's first patrons, large expenditures tended to be reinforcing. That is, those who spent the most sponsoring programs expressed the greatest faith in the new medium's effectiveness as a sales tool. The May 1949 *Printers' Ink* survey found that the more a firm invested in TV advertising, the more likely it judged it to be "profitable." Eighty percent of those who had spent $250,000 judged TV buys worthwhile compared to 20 percent of those who had allotted less than $5,000.[5]

Depending on the product and the desired market, television—even in the earliest years—could be surprisingly cost effective. Mass advertisers calculated efficiency on the basis of cost per thousand (CPM). With television charges initially slight, especially at certain hours, a company might spend less per thousand consumers on TV than on network radio. The dairy producer Borden in early 1950 dropped its sponsorship of *County Fair* on CBS Radio. The radio network's penetration into virtually all American households held less value to Borden, which did not distribute all its products nationally. A more sensible strategy was to concentrate broadcast buys in select markets. This included "spot" TV advertising, featuring Elsie the Borden Cow, in large urban markets where television was spreading rapidly. Borden reached New York's television homes at a cost per thousand television homes of $1.42. For three major markets, New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia, Borden's CPM was $1.59. On *County Fair*, the CPM approached $5.00. "Borden's television program," the trade journal *Tide* concluded, "probably represents the biggest advertising bargain the company has ever had."[6]

Television's ability to represent goods visually also attracted advertisers. Radio had permitted the pitchman to appeal directly to consumers in their homes. TV allowed the seller to *show* them the product. "We sell by demonstration," one advertiser told *Printers' Ink*. "On television we can demonstrate." "TV's capacity for visual demonstration," a household cleaning supply manufacturer explained, "is so necessary and useful for [our] company's products." "Television has added a 'third dimension' to Chevrolet advertising," remarked Chevy ad manager C. J. French. "With the combination of the Chevrolet in motion on the screen, plus

the sounds accompanying it through the loudspeaker, television provides a combination that is unbeatable for realism," French explained. "This third dimension, obtainable only in television, is a great step forward in showing our product to the customer, and a tremendous aid in drawing the customer to the dealer."[7] Television, wrote an ad agency executive in 1949, "revived one of the most basic and effective forms of selling—the house-to-house demonstration. It offers, as no other medium can, the opportunity to employ the persuasiveness of the human voice, the eye-catching, memory-jogging quality of the printed page and the sales-making drama of 'products in action.'"[8]

Nevertheless, many major ad buyers stood on the sidelines. Procter and Gamble, which spent more on advertising than any other U.S. corporation, invested $107,310 or just 0.43 percent of its total budget on network television in 1949. It spent $17.3 million, or 70 percent of its total expenditure, on network radio. General Mills, another major network radio underwriter, was similarly indifferent to television; with an $11.1 million budget, it allotted $6.7 million to network radio compared with $75,027 to network TV.[9]

This caution had two explanations. First, the networks were slow to develop many popular but relatively inexpensive daytime children's programs and soap operas, which advertisers like P&G and General Mills preferred. Second, many advertisers of mass products assumed that television had yet to become a mass medium. Indeed, they believed that TV ownership had an upper-class bias; it was, in the words of one trade journal, "basically a 'glamour' medium."[10]

Television had to combat this image for several years. Although the first set owners likely had higher incomes, studies indicated that this class bias was lessening.[11] TV was rapidly entering many middle- and working-class homes. How else could the ratings success of the very broad comedy of Milton Berle be explained? Surely he was not that popular on New York's tony Upper East Side and in Westchester and Fairfield Counties. Nonetheless, some in advertising persisted in regarding it as an elite medium, hardly an effective instrument of mass promotion.

There were early signs that television was worth a try. Special promotions included in TV ads received huge responses. In September 1948, New York City area Chevrolet dealers ran two twenty-second spots offering a free booklet explaining the rules of the latest video sports fad, roller derby. Stations received seven hundred requests for

copies, while car dealers reported more than thirty thousand inquiries.[12] Good Humor, which sold frozen ice cream treats in special trucks, began advertising on four New York stations. It offered call cards for customers to place in their windows when they wanted the Good Humor Man to stop. One commercial brought demands for its entire supply of twenty-five thousand call cards.[13] When Disney Hats transferred all of its $150,000 advertising budget into television in 1948, sales in New York City alone rose 38 percent, even though overall industry sales had been sluggish. Sales clerks reported repeated instances of customers requesting "the hat advertised on television."[14] During a thirteen-week period in 1949, sixty thousand *Howdy Doody* viewers requested a humming lasso offered in return for two Mason's coconut bar wrappers.[15] Even if the CPM favored radio, remarked the research director of a major agency, television "may sell a greater proportion of those it reaches, and it may even sell them more convincingly."[16]

NBC presented more systematic evidence in 1950. Thomas E. Coffin, a young professor of psychology at Hofstra College, had been conducting research on the social effects of television's introduction. He was soon working for NBC. His new employer had been less interested in communication research than CBS, whose president had a doctorate in psychology. But NBC was investing far more than Columbia in television in the late 1940s and was anxious to break down advertiser resistance to the newest medium. Coffin designed a study of television's effects on consumer spending. Coffin and his assistants surveyed 1,651 residents of New York City and Long Island, carefully dividing their sample between set owners and nonowners. His research, lavishly promoted by NBC, argued that consumers owning televisions were more likely to identify and purchase products advertised on TV. A national cheese maker, probably Kraft, that had bought TV time experienced a 17 percent rise in sales. Those for durable goods promoted on television increased 16.7 percent. During a one-month period, purchases by set owners for TV-advertised brands rose 30.1 percent. At the same time, *The Hofstra Study* warned advertisers that avoiding television risked losing business. Among set owners, sales for nonadvertised durable goods fell 35 percent. For all products not advertised on TV, sales dropped 19.1 percent. "Here you see the double-edged effect of television," *The Hofstra Study* declared. "Not only does it increase sales of television advertised brands in television homes—it cuts down the sales of non-television brands in those same homes."[17]

A year later, another NBC-Hofstra study, *Television Today*, magnified these claims. The second survey had a larger sample (which extended into northern New Jersey). It included one CBS executive and, Coffin reported, "a couple of well-known movie stars in their Park Avenue apartments." Television advertising, the study concluded, created an extra 15.6 customers per month for every dollar invested. Just under two-thirds dubbed TV the "most convincing" form of advertising.[18]

Despite such evidence, advertisers fretted about costs. Admiral, an appliance manufacturer, faced a typical pioneer's dilemma. In 1949, *The Admiral Broadway Revue*, starring Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca, had strong ratings and reviews. Yet the company dropped the program after six months. The company's chief executive apologetically told Caesar that the *Revue*'s huge following created more demand for Admiral televisions than it could assemble. Admiral needed cash to expand its manufacturing facilities. "Maybe for the first time in history," a baffled Caesar screamed, "a show is being canceled because it's bringing in too *much* business." But Admiral did not withdraw from television altogether, it simply moved its money to other, less expensive programs.[19] As the networks increased their charges in the early 1950s, agencies and advertisers grew angrier. Observing a special February 1953 meeting of advertisers and the presidents of CBS and NBC, *Variety*'s George Rosen described "the storm warnings long anticipated in video over the mounting cost of shows."[20]

Cost concerns endangered the more costly weekly series. Although CBS in particular preferred to schedule the same program every week, Chevrolet in 1949 would only underwrite its variety show, *Inside U.S.A. with Chevrolet*, fortnightly. An agent handling the Chevy account explained that "television's impact is so great that maybe you don't have to air a big show every week."[21] Even the Texas Company toyed with having Berle's program appear every other week. "Mounting TV talent and production costs created quite a problem for advertisers," reported a *Tide* writer late in 1949. "Every-other-week shows began to emerge as a partial solution."[22]

Alternate weekly sponsorship violated one industry rule. Most advertising agencies prized "continuity"; a message's effectiveness depended on continuous delivery. "Continuity has been a basic tenet of advertising strategy for as long as we can remember," *Printers' Ink* declared. Continuity varied by mass medium. Advertising executives surveyed in 1950 believed that carrying one to three ads a month in weekly periodi-

cals achieved continuity. Regarding television, 33 of 41 polled preferred to advertise weekly. Advertisers, *Printers' Ink* concluded, "found that lapses in continuity—for however short a period—put a big dent in the effectiveness of their sales and advertising."[23]

Alternate weekly shows confused many viewers. Radio had conditioned them to having their programs aired at a specified time every seven days. In a June 1951 survey of 770 viewers in New York City and northern New Jersey, 68.2 percent preferred programs appearing every week. They found weekly series, especially programs, like *Burns and Allen*, with the same casts, easier to follow. And they always knew what was on. Many of those polled—60.0 percent—reported not realizing which alternating program was slated for a given week. Just over 33.3 percent said they missed some alternating programs because they did not remember when they were telecast.[24] The fate of the situation comedy *Amos 'n' Andy* tested the habit principle. Based on the popular radio series, *Amos 'n' Andy* had good ratings during its first season. Then its sponsor, Blatz Brewery, decided to cut costs by reducing the number of episodes filmed from thirty-nine to twenty-six. Some viewers fell out of the habit of watching the program, and *Amos 'n' Andy* dropped from the Nielsen top twenty-five.[25]

In other ways, advertisers' thriftiness threatened to undo the networks' designs for the medium. Containing production expenses improved advertisers' cost per thousand. But it could cheapen the end product. If network programs, or too many of them, possessed a threadbare quality, they jeopardized the medium's future. "Television wants to be big, glorious, better than anything, but it doesn't want to spend any money," wrote a veteran radio writer in 1950. "Sponsors won't; networks spend a lot but spread it too thin. Instead of concentrating on five good shows, big ones, impressive ones, they spread it around among 25 shows hoping that each one will be great. The hoped-for television boom, as you know, has fizzled out."[26] Weaver of NBC, himself a former adman, realized that the goals of the advertiser and the network were not one and the same. "The lowest cost per thousand," Weaver argued in 1954, "is not necessarily equated with the best public interest or the best kind of program service."[27]

Some of NBC's dramatic anthologies especially concerned Weaver. Most sponsors were reluctant to spend much on their shows. An anthology with an especially gifted producer, notably Fred Coe of the Philco and Goodyear programs, might overcome the financial limitations of

the advertiser. But not all anthologies were so ably led and shrewdly budgeted. *Armstrong Circle Theatre* especially upset NBC executives in September 1953. "There are obvious things *Armstrong* can do to improve the present program," one wrote, "spend more money on scripts, on stars, and on production in general."[28]

CBS had its own problems with sponsors. When Blatz jettisoned *Amos 'n' Andy* after two seasons, Columbia had to cancel the series. No new patron could be located. The cigarette maker Philip Morris dropped the most popular TV series, *I Love Lucy*, at the end of the 1954–55 season. Despite its high ratings, and the leads' willingness to plug the product (they were in character, both Arnaz and Ball were chain-smokers), Philip Morris concluded that the program was not selling its brand. Research indicated that heavy smokers did not watch television until after 11:00 p.m. Philip Morris's promotional budget was best spent elsewhere.[29]

Such momentary crises cloaked a larger development in the networks' relations with Madison Avenue. Ad agencies largely refrained from following the network radio system in which they had produced many of the most popular network programs. Television shows had far higher costs and technical demands. Some of the larger agencies, notably J. Walter Thompson, did engage in TV production; agencies produced approximately one-third of all network TV shows in the mid–1950s. More often, however, even they delegated the task either to the networks or to independent producers. CBS and NBC were only too happy to produce programs because, among other advantages, doing so lessened (but did not eliminate) sponsor interference with their production. Independent producers Arnaz and Ball, who created *I Love Lucy*, accepted suggestions from Philip Morris about the series (for example, that Lucy should not smoke during her on-air pregnancy). Raydic, which produced *It's a Great Life* for Chrysler on NBC, agreed that "no automobile will be used in a close-up other than a Chrysler Corporation product." But notwithstanding such concessions, the series was Raydic's property, with NBC earning a percentage of the syndication rights. Philip Morris could have, in fact, owned all or part of *I Love Lucy* when initially negotiating with CBS and Desilu in 1951, but the tobacco company deemed it too great a risk.[30]

By the time Philip Morris abandoned Lucy and Desi, still another trend had become apparent. *I Love Lucy* in 1954–55 had alternating sponsors. This (as well as the enormous popularity of the program itself)

made finding a substitute for the cigarette manufacturer less vexing. It also indicated another strategy for advertisers of certain prime-time series. The higher costs of programs like *I Love Lucy* encouraged some companies to underwrite such series every other week. Although sponsors lost weekly continuity, alternate sponsorship limited their costs. Alternate sponsorship became an increasingly common practice over the course of the decade. Between the 1955–56 and 1960–61 seasons, the percentage of series with alternating sponsors nearly doubled to just under half—48.1 percent—of all evening programs (7:30 to 11:00 ET).[31]

Weaver strongly encouraged two or more advertisers to sponsor a program. He was all too aware of advertisers' vigilance about costs. Left to their own devices, the vast majority of sponsors preferred to restrain the production values of programs. Admiral's handling of *Revue* was a case in point. Admiral canceled the program, despite its being a strong component of the NBC schedule, because of its high cost. Although Weaver never made an example of Admiral, he developed strategies to prevent future programs from being hostages to individual sponsors. When Sid and Imogene returned in 1950, their program was even pricier—and a half hour longer—while matching the earlier version's popularity. But, by selling *Your Show of Shows* to multiple sponsors, NBC had much more control over its fate. And the network, Weaver averred, was more willing to invest the money needed to produce popular shows. Citing *Your Show of Shows* as well as *Howdy Doody* (but not *The Texaco Star Theater*), he declared "every pivotal hit developed at NBC since 1947 was on a multiple-product basis."[32]

Weaver went one step further by promoting the "magazine concept" of advertising. Underwriting for some NBC shows would be sold, in the fashion of mass circulation periodicals, to a number of firms. Instead of sponsoring an entire program, advertisers would purchase spots on different shows. He considered the magazine concept to be a hedge against rising production costs while permitting many smaller companies to enter television. "Any national advertiser," Weaver explained, "can use NBC television."[33]

The vast majority of advertising agencies, Weaver realized, would not support programming innovations. Ad agents worked for clients, not the networks. NBC's *Today Show* was very much Weaver's conception, not a sponsor's. The two-hour program could only be underwritten by multiple sponsors, and most advertisers doubted that the early morning program would draw viewers. *Today*, a Weaver aide recalled,

"was almost snickered out of existence by the advertising wiseacres along Madison Avenue when it first went on the air."[34]

The magazine concept possessed other advantages. It allowed the network to control *when* a program appeared on the schedule. A series could be slated depending on its effects on the audience flow to or from other telecasts. The network's need for maximum audiences took precedence over a single sponsor's desire to schedule its middlebrow musical program at 8:30 p.m. Mondays. Moreover, advertisers who shared sponsorship could not display, as many did, the same intrusiveness in the production process (micromanaging Weaver well remembered from his days working on Fred Allen's radio program).

Although some advertisers accepted the magazine concept in the early and mid–1950s, many of Weaver's former colleagues successfully stood firm. This was especially true in evening prime time, when just 10 of 115 programs during the 1955–56 series had multiple sponsors, compared with 75 with single sponsors.[35] (The others alternated sponsors.) Multiple sponsorship made the most sense for longer programs like *Today*, *Tonight*, and a relatively small number of evening prime-time offerings. Two of NBC's variety hours had multiple sponsors, but not Milton Berle's program, first exclusively sponsored by Texaco, then by Buick. Only during Berle's last season, 1955–56, did his program have multiple sponsors.[36] The problem besetting advocates of multiple sponsors was the market for TV time. It was ever growing; all the networks were earning money by 1955. Yet it still favored the buyer.

Anticipating that the future would at least partly resemble the past—that agencies would be actively involved in overseeing programming—J. Walter Thompson in early 1956 sought a ten-year lease for a Hollywood office. Executives for the nation's largest agency expected to review pilots and the production of clients' programs. The growing costs of and complications to TV programming might force agencies to assign more production to independent producers. But "we feel strongly that the agency more and more will have to become involved in production decisions," concluded JWT executive Dan Seymour in November 1956. "Our clients rely on our judgment in the purchase of the show, and will expect us to deliver the kind of show which we have represented they are buying."[37]

Regardless of the terms, by mid-decade an advertiser seeking the largest possible national audience had to buy network television. The newest medium approached saturation levels in many of the country's

larger markets, where the rate of diffusion ranged between 80 and 95 percent. As early as May 1950, TV reached more homes than the most popular national magazine, *Life.* Two years later, the number of households with television in greater St. Louis exceeded the circulation of either of that city's daily newspapers.[38] Radio remained the more common—but less utilized—electronic medium. In 1955, 96.4 percent of all homes had one or more radios compared with 64.5 percent with televisions. But though morning radio listening levels remained unaffected by television's introduction, evening audiences for network radio programs collapsed. Radio was becoming a secondary or supplemental medium, something utilized while driving from work or washing the dishes. Radio, the advertising agent Fairfax M. Cone remarked in 1956, "commands its greatest attention when people are doing something else; when men are shaving or dressing or eating or driving to work or home again; and when women are doing their housework." The average hours of daily radio listening, A. C. Nielsen Company calculated, had fallen from 4.4 in 1948 to 1.8 for homes with televisions in 1955. (Even among homes that lacked TVs, the average hours of radio listening fell to 3.3 hours.) At the same time, new, nonnetwork competition began attracting more listeners. The networks' share of the total radio audience slipped from 83 percent in 1948 to 71 percent in 1955. As Leo Bogart noted, in 1948 the most popular radio program, *Lux Radio Theatre*, reached just under 10 million homes. Seven years later, the highest rated radio series, *Amos 'n' Andy*, could claim just over 3.4 million homes. By comparison, *The George Gobel Show*, which ranked tenth in the Nielsens for February 15–28, 1955, reached 13.8 million households. National advertisers had no choice but to move their money into the newest medium. Observed Bogart, "TV's growth, both as a leisure-time activity and as an advertising vehicle, has been largely at the expense of radio."[39]

By the mid–1950s, most national advertisers found television irresistible. Procter and Gamble, which had been radio's greatest patron in 1949, was slashing its radio network buys in mid–1955. Having started with a token TV budget in 1949, P&G spent $43.4 million on television in 1956. Television's expansion had made it an increasingly efficient promotional medium. Depending on the time of day, TV's CPM surpassed that of other mass media. In 1955, three series sponsored by Eastman Kodak, despite having middling ratings and high production costs, averaged lower CPMs than purchases in magazines and news-

papers. *Screen Director's Playhouse*, the Kodak program with the highest CPM ($2.43), still compared favorably with magazines ($3.81) and newspapers ($5.61).[40]

Advertising agents were convinced that people *did watch* the commercials, rather than make a run to the kitchen or lavatory. They downplayed reports that water pressure declined in some cities on the half hour. Changing channels was not an option in some markets, where viewers had few stations from which to choose. Few had remote controls. Then, too, some surveys suggested that the first set owners found even the crudest, first generation of commercials to be intriguing. Many had never *seen* that new vegetable slicer.[41]

As television became more popular, relations between many advertisers and their agencies changed. Despite some glamorization of their calling, ad agents were always vulnerable, subject to a client's discontent or, far worse, the loss of an account. In the early going, agents often had wide leeway in their TV planning. But as television proved more commonplace and more expensive, clients became more demanding. Some advertisers—like Eastman Kodak, the camera manufacturer—tried to micromanage their programs. Kodak's director of advertising, W. B. Potter, complained that Ozzie Nelson, on *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, relied on too much physical comedy. "We want Ozzie to be a respected and talented man of the house," Potter wrote, "not taking pratfalls, not being what he termed himself, 'the laughing stock of the evening.'"[42] Anxious to plug its cameras, Kodak insisted that the Nelson family make more trips, to justify Ozzie's taking more photographs. Trying to contain his program's costs by avoiding more expensive exterior shooting, Nelson objected. J. Walter Thompson, which handled the camera maker's account, found itself having to mediate between the star-producer and its client. Ozzie made some concessions; the Nelsons even visited Washington. About to depart, older son David remarked, "Here're your cameras, Pop. You don't want to forget them." The Nelsons shot plenty of pictures.[43]

Advertisers did not always focus exclusively on the consumer. The Speidel Corporation, which had been manufacturing expandable metal watchbands since 1940, wanted to extend its market by pressing jewelry and department stores to carry and promote Speidel bands. In 1949, Speidel invested most of its advertising budget on television.[44] Some large manufacturers used TV advertising in part to achieve a "dealer effect," that is, to nurture or maintain the loyalties of retailers. Chrysler

engaged in an ambitious TV campaign in the fall of 1954 in part to soothe the feelings of dealers angry over the automaker's year lag in redesigning its models. When NBC began telecasting longer specials in color in 1954, some advertisers tied their patronage of such shows to special parties for retailers and others. Sunbeam hosted events for dealers and their families, with color televisions to allow them to see the next new thing in broadcast technology.[45]

Certain advertisers pitched themselves. These were the "institutional" advertisers, including Alcoa, DuPont, and U.S. Steel. They regarded television as extensions of their corporate public relations. Underwriting "quality" cultural and informational programming, they believed, cultivated goodwill among better-educated, more influential viewers likely to number among their communities' opinion elite. Grateful for the subsidy of their preferences, such viewers would hold corporate video patrons in higher regard.[46]

Such considerations mattered at a time when many of the country's largest companies worried about their place in American society. It was not yet to be taken for granted. Some feared antitrust initiatives, which they hoped might be less probable—or less passionately pursued—if the scrutinized corporation could promote its corporate citizenship by patronizing the "good" public arts. U.S. Steel, for one, faced a Justice Department suit in 1950 and was especially anxious to underwrite a prestige drama. It happened to match the program preference of the corporation's executives.[47]

For some companies, underwriting prestige programming involved more than a search for goodwill. It was an extension of their marketing plans. Even U.S. Steel promoted products, including prefabricated steel homes and the all-steel Cyclone fence ("the all-day babysitter").[48] Oldsmobile and others believed that sponsoring Weaver's spectaculars boosted the prestige of their products. Joyce Hall only agreed to enter television if Hallmark could underwrite more expensive, culturally ambitious programming on an irregular basis. Hall was one of the few national advertisers who shared Weaver's cultural goals for television and love of theater, even if that meant reaching fewer viewers. "We think it is better to make 25 million good impressions," Hall wrote in 1961, "than 50 million less favorable ones." Many of Hallmark's earliest productions were adaptations of Shakespeare. Yet Hall was also a businessman. He originally intended *The Hallmark Hall of Fame* to come before days, like Christmas, when the demand for greeting cards rose. At the

same time, Hallmark's theatrical aspirations suited the company's self-definition as the elite brand of greeting card. ("When you care enough to send the very best.")[49]

Sacrifices

Advertisers—whether product or institutional—took pains to protect their "brand." This could affect *what* a company sponsored. S. C. Johnson, the manufacturer of household cleaning supplies, declined to sponsor crime shows. "A Johnson image is desired," an executive remarked, "and programs must be good, clean, and for the family."[50]

Brand protection could lead to comical extremes. De Soto's ad agency, Groucho Marx recalled, forced a contestant named Ford to claim another last name.[51] Ford would not allow an exterior shot in New York showing the Chrysler building. A cigarette maker demanded that villainous Russian army officers in one teleplay not be shown smoking too many cigarettes; another, sponsoring a filtered brand, asked that the heavies smoke nontipped cigarettes. A rival to American Tobacco, which produced Lucky Strike cigarettes, insisted that scriptwriter Rod Serling not use the words "American" or "lucky" in one of his teleplays. (Serling substituted "United States" and "fortunate.")[52] In producing *The Adventures of Rin Tin Tin*, Screen Gems was not to show the canine protagonist consuming "foods such as meat which compete with [sponsor] Nabisco's prepared foods for dogs."[53] Negotiating with the producer of *Damon Runyon Theatre*, the agency representing the brewer Anheuser-Busch carefully specified that the consumption of alcohol never be treated "unfavorably." In addition, "no scene or dialogue shall, directly or indirectly, depict over-indulgence or over-use of alcoholic beverages."[54] Westinghouse, then a manufacturer of light bulbs, resisted *Studio One*'s attempts to produce an adaptation of Kipling's *Light That Failed.* "Kipling's light may fail," a friend of producer Worthington Miner's cracked, "but never a bulb from Westinghouse."[55]

Not all advertisers closely monitored their productions. Philco and Kraft gave the producers of their dramatic plays considerable freedom. Only one *U.S. Steel Hour* production in 1954, an adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, upset some board members, because of the heroine's suicide.[56] Rod Serling believed the agency, and not the advertiser, was more likely to object to a script. "For the most part," Serling wrote in 1958, the ad agent "is pretty much the translator of the sponsor's policies and dogma. His only deviation from this is to get even more

protective than the known sponsor policy dictates. It is rare, to the best of my knowledge, that any script problems ever go beyond him to the sponsor. He has practically a carte blanche prerogative in any judgments involved."[57]

The temptation to tamper with a TV property could be enormous. A sponsor's exclusive patronage of a program carried the possibility of fostering a gratitude factor, but also the risk of generating ill will. Underwriters of programming intended for the very young could be self-conscious about the medium's behavioral effects. Assuming that the Western *Wild Bill Hickok* had a youthful audience, the sponsor, Kellogg cereals, prohibited any saloon scenes. Moreover, Marshall Hickok was never to kill anyone. Indeed, a representative of Kellogg's agency wrote, "whenever possible, the plot is built around a situation where Marshall Hickok outwits the criminal involved rather than overcomes him with violence."[58] Hallmark cautioned producers not to anger certain viewers. "Controversial elements are to be avoided," the company ruled in a January 1955 "Dramatic Policy." This included plays about the Civil War (which might, apparently, offend white southerners or African Americans). "Political and, especially, religious subjects must be most carefully screened . . . making sure that nothing on the Hall of Fame will be offensive to any segment of the audience."[59]

Such concerns inspired the darkest practice of television advertisers and advertising agencies in the 1950s. In 1947 three former FBI agents began publishing a four-page newsletter, *Counterattack*, which listed actors and other talent who had been or were members of the Communist Party or had supported pro-Communist organizations or causes. (The latter category was often defined very loosely.) They should not have access to television. In June 1950, the threesome published *Red Channels*, a book-length compilation of 151 individuals they deemed pro-Communist. Initially ignored, *Red Channels* drew more notice in late 1950, when Jean Muir was dropped from the cast of *The Aldrich Family*. She had been among those listed in *Red Channels*. Most advertisers and agencies gradually began insisting that listed performers be banned from appearing on their programs. The mere allegation of pro-Communist sympathies usually sufficed. Actors wrongly accused struggled to clear themselves. The Borden Company vetoed the casting of one actor because he had the same last name as a blacklisted performer. Most often, advertising agencies coordinated the blacklist. Between April 1955 and March 1956, Young and Rubicam rejected a third of

the five hundred names that producer David Susskind had submitted for clearance *for one program.* The banned included the eight-year-old daughter of a performer.[60]

Despite such excesses, the television blacklist did not touch every performer guilty of having signed the wrong petition or party registration form—nor did it evolve uncontested. As Thomas Doherty noted, prominent critics included John Crosby and Jack Gould. A star's appeal could also inhibit the inquisitors. Lucille Ball escaped the fate of Muir and others, even though the comedienne had in fact registered as a Communist Party member in 1936. "The lesson learned," Doherty wrote, "was that while the small fry were hooked and gutted, the big fish would be tossed back."[61]

Then, too, not all advertisers fell in line. Joyce Hall, whose family firm sponsored *The Hallmark Hall of Fame*, told his producer to ignore the blacklist. Blacklisting was "for the insecure and stupid," director George Schaefer recalled, "and I must say, Hallmark always was secure."[62] Philco, which underwrote *The Philco Television Playhouse*, produced by Fred Coe, ignored *Red Channels.* But as Coe's biographer noted, when Goodyear became the alternating sponsor in the fall 1951 season, its agency, Young and Rubicam, insisted "on using *Red Channels* as a casting guide." Coe did persuade a Young and Rubicam agent to permit him to cast a blacklisted actress, Judy Holliday, though the concession followed a three-martini lunch.[63]

Sober ad agents normally buckled under. In 1947 House testimony, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover had referred to Communist Party members who had "infiltrated the airwaves," a remark that fronted *Red Channels*' 1950 compilation of tainted performers. Yet Hoover's charge was difficult to demonstrate. Although some wartime radio dramas had endorsed the more liberal aspirations of some within the Roosevelt administration, that hardly made their authors Soviet agents. A more compelling argument was posed when a Connecticut woman, Hester McCullough, phoned an ad agent to complain about Muir's casting on *The Aldrich Family.* Muir "was just an actress," he remarked. "What harm can she possibly do?" McCullough replied, "Yes, I know she's just an actress, but until all loyal Americans have been put to work, I don't think people like that should be on radio and television."[64] A more sinister theory was that the blacklisters used fears of a Communist conspiracy to silence broadcasting's more progressive voices. Broadcast historian Erik Barnouw, who knew many of the victims, angrily described

Red Channels as "a move to purge these liberal tendencies. . . . part of an anti–New Deal vendetta."[65]

For their part, advertisers had larger preoccupations. The Cold War with the Soviet Union assumed a new intensity with the outbreak of the Korean War in mid–1950. Many Americans assumed that Korea marked only the first battle of World War III. Membership in the Communist Party could not be ignored if the world's largest Communist power had become the greatest threat to national security. Even a critic of the blacklist, the producer David Susskind, later said he would never have employed a known Communist.[66] That many of the performers' participation in Communist or Communist-leaning groups preceded the Cold War was usually downplayed.

Even if the general public forgave past associations, advertisers knew that a segment of public opinion would not. These were the hyperpatriots who belonged to veterans organizations and some Catholic lay associations. The country's more reactionary newspaper columnists, as well as Ed Sullivan, still contributing to the *New York Daily News*, trumpeted their concerns. The owner of a chain of Syracuse supermarkets, Laurence Johnson, frequently traveled to New York to lobby against the hiring of any blacklisted talent. Johnson and others could organize product boycotts and otherwise punish those companies whose TV programs included "subversives." Advertisers were not underwriting television programs to offend potential customers. "Our company policy," an agent wrote, was "to present our clients' products and services in the most favorable light and *to do nothing to incur the ill will of any substantial group of people*."[67] Remarked one producer, "The favorite slogan along Madison Avenue is 'Why buy yourself a headache?'"[68]

The networks were in a difficult situation. As long as television was a buyer's market, they could not ignore advertiser demands that certain talent not be hired. CBS was more reliant on its broadcast divisions and more willing to honor the blacklist. *Counterattack*, the head of CBS Television News Sig Mickelson remembered, "became must reading for virtually all senior staff members." Revealingly, because the news division itself had little advertiser interest, it was relatively immune from the blacklist. Still, beginning in December 1950, everyone had to complete a loyalty form that inquired about past political involvement, including any Communist and Fascist organizations. (Tellingly, one of Mickelson's colleagues compared the procedures to those instituted during "the *last* war," that is, World War II.) Most completed the

form, though not all did so quietly. A young director decried "a policy which I feel is both immoral and illegal." Some were let go. The artist Ben Shahn was dropped as an illustrator for Columbia print ads because of his past politics. A colleague told Mickelson, "There may be vestigial influences that creep into his renderings."[69]

Advertisers bore some responsibility as well for television's whiteness. Blacks rarely appeared in commercials; as late as 1966, one study indicated that black performers constituted 2 percent of the casts of commercials. *Amos 'n' Andy*, one of the few programs with an African American cast, left the air in 1953 partly because CBS could not find a sponsor after Blatz withdrew. Three years later, NBC had to scramble to find advertisers for *The Nat King Cole Show*, starring an African American singer. An established performer whose admirers included President Eisenhower, Cole possessed an understated manner perfect for the home screen. He had refused to involve himself in the civil rights movement and even defended playing before segregated audiences. Yet despite such moderation, some NBC stations in the South, including ones in Birmingham and New Orleans, dropped or refused to carry the program, discouraging potential sponsors. *The Nat King Cole Show* left the air after a year's run. NBC lost $400,000 on its attempt to integrate network television. Cole himself blamed advertisers. "The only prejudice I have found anywhere in TV is in some advertising agencies," he remarked. "Madison Avenue," he quipped, "is afraid of the dark."[70]

For their part, agencies, above all else, had to protect the brand. Like the networks, national advertisers had to contend with white resistance to the civil rights movement. When the black actor Sidney Poitier netted a lead role in an October 1955 *Philco Playhouse*, Philco did not object. Robert Alan Aurthur's teleplay, *A Man Is Ten Feet Tall*, was not a civil rights screed, though Poitier's casting carried a quietly integrationist message. But many southern viewers (and some Philco dealers in the South) protested the show. In Jackson, Mississippi, six thousand signed a petition saying they would boycott the program (apparently unaware that Philco was about to end its sponsorship).[71] Several months later, Rod Serling planned a TV play based on the brutal lynching of an African American boy in Mississippi for *The U.S. Steel Hour*. The steelmaker ordered a rewrite. The giant corporation did not fear consumer retribution, Serling wrote, but "the resultant strain in public relations." Despite U.S. Steel's caution, publicity for the revised play left some in the South believing that it would, indeed, deal with the murder of

Emmett Till. Fifteen thousand people sent letters and telegrams protesting that prospect. In fact, Serling had changed everything. The Till character, Serling wrote, had become "an old Jew who ran a pawnshop" in New England. "The end result," wrote his biographer Joel Engel, "was horrendously absurd." Undaunted, Serling tried again to adapt the Till story for *Playhouse 90* in 1958. But sponsors compelled him to alter the locale to the 1870s Southwest and make the victim a Mexican. One sponsor, Allstate Insurance, forced him to eliminate a character's suicide. Serling decried "the whole pressure system of sponsors, agencies and networks."[72]

Serling and other writers confronted a systemic limitation to commercial television in the 1950s and later. Broadcasters and their patrons feared giving offense. Some marginal groups, to be sure, could be and were hurt by stereotyped treatment (or their absence from the home screen altogether). But in truth, they did not belong to the Viewing Nation. As John Cogley found, a few letters complaining about the leftist politics of an actor might cost him a role in a teleplay.[73] But communications from respected civil rights leaders, angry over the new medium's whiteness and stereotyping, carried little weight. Although NBC tried to heed such concerns, its experience with *The Nat King Cole Show* suggested the network was better off playing to majority sentiments. The goodwill that Philco earned among 13 million African Americans for casting Poitier in *A Man Is Ten Feet Tall*, Robert Alan Aurthur argued, should have offset the loss of business to white supremacists.[74] But just as moral proprieties regarding sexuality must not be mocked for fear of upsetting older viewers and programs for children must honor traditional hierarchies of right and wrong, so too, the six decades' old racial order in the South must not be undermined.

In one sense, that the networks and advertisers had such anxieties makes little sense in retrospect. Fifties television was, for all practical purposes, an oligopoly of three networks. They were owned and managed by men who were hardly bigoted about race or Victorian about sexuality. They understood the real world to be more complex than the morally certain universe of *The Lone Ranger*. Could not such men have imposed their moral and political enlightenment on the Viewing Nation?

Not really. Broadcasting remained the guest in the living room, and a relatively new acquaintance at that. Like any new friend at a party, television wanted to be invited back. Middle-aged and older Americans in the mid–1950s could remember not having radios. Broadcasting gave

them and younger Americans great pleasure. And it was capable of unsettling them as well. When rattled, many blamed the electronic object and demanded that it behave. Letters were written, to the networks, to the sponsors, to members of Congress.

Sponsor as Border Guard

Sponsors not only deeply affected the content of television but also helped to determine industry practice and structure. Advertisers in effect decided which of the conflicting programming philosophies NBC and CBS offered would prevail. Media buying practices, which networks and station advertisers patronized, similarly established the degree to which television would be a competitive industry.

Once committed to television, national advertisers had to come to terms with the medium's most daring programming innovation. Beginning in the fall of 1954, NBC began scheduling elaborate spectaculars, most telecast in color. These special programs were well beyond the budget of most advertisers. They also violated the old broadcast rule that audiences preferred the regularly scheduled series, and rewarded their underwriters. Weaver, the former adman, dismissed such assumptions. Among other things, he told Martin Mayer, "it's not repetition that sells."[75] CBS boosted its special productions, including *The Best of Broadway*, though without Weaver's enthusiasm.

Although Weaver found some takers, patrons of the "specs" faced some unhappy realities. They felt let down by what they considered the at best uneven quality of the first specials. "We expected them to be the best available TV shows," complained the ad agent Raymond Spector on behalf of both Hazel Bishop and Sunbeam. Spector demanded that his clients be released from their obligation to underwrite them (the network refused). Then, too, the color TV boom had failed to occur, which undermined the logic of shooting color commercials, to say nothing of the greater expense of color program production (which *Tide* reported boosted costs 50%). Nor did the spectaculars net the overwhelming ratings that Weaver and others had promised. Max Liebman's Sunday night spectaculars of 1954–55, with their multiple sponsors, drew fewer viewers than Ed Sullivan's *Toast of the Town*, sponsored by Lincoln-Mercury. *I Love Lucy* commanded larger average audiences than NBC's Monday evening specials, with the exception of *Peter Pan*. Such outcomes had not been predicted by NBC sales personnel. An agent handling the Oldsmobile account remarked, "The Oldsmobile

[Saturday] spectacular is obviously a show that was oversold, and any legitimate disappointment in it comes out of that overselling."[76]

An already skeptical industry divided over Weaver's great experiment. Reynolds Metals, which had sponsored the weekly series *Mr. Peepers*, resented the loss of continuity when an NBC spectacular bumped the series every fourth week. Although Reynolds initially agreed to cosponsor the Sunday night specials, it ended its participation after the first season. Some continued to underwrite specials on NBC and CBS during the 1955–56 season. Although the first-year ratings had been strong enough to retain some sponsors, others could not disguise their displeasure. "We are not buying any more of them," commented Reynolds's radio-TV director. "We think those spectaculars to date have done a good job—but not what we hoped. We don't think we obtained what we thought we would get." More noisily, the agency for Hazel Bishop cosmetics declared itself and its client "through with the big, very lavish type of program. It does not pay off to get our commercial across."[77]

Columbia faced similar discontent. Westinghouse dropped CBS's *Best of Broadway* in mid–1955. *The Best of Broadway*, "lacking sufficient frequency to develop listening habits, has not been very good," *Advertising Age*'s TV columnist concluded.[78] Ford very angrily ended its sponsorship of special dramatic productions a year later. Greater efficiencies were achieved by sponsoring a half-hour Western. In a major review of the Ford account, the car maker and its agency agreed that "a blanket barrage of TV spots, effectively timed, can create as high a degree of special interest at announcement time as would the use of a single 'spectacular.'"[79]

Banking on spectaculars, Weaver had misread the future. The great ratings successes of 1954, 1955, and 1956 were not the spectaculars but variations on more traditional program genres, quiz shows and Westerns, as well as ABC's *Disneyland.* Unlike NBC, CBS successfully played both sides of the street. Columbia scheduled some specials while successfully launching *Gunsmoke* and *The $64,000 Question.* The latter explicitly violated the Weaver strategy. It was inexpensive and drew large audiences, thus giving its sponsor a coveted CPM. Moreover, *The $64,000 Question*, sponsored by Revlon cosmetics, created the kind of day-after conversation that Weaver had assumed only the costly specials could inspire. Viewers did more than talk about *The $64,000 Question*, they demonstrated the gratitude factor by buying up Revlon products.[80]

Disneyland's success signaled another problem for Weaver—and an advantage for advertisers. Disney's series marked the beginning of ABC's gradual emergence as a competitive network. With scarce capital for programming, ABC rejected the spectacular strategy as too costly. And, as ABC slowly developed an inventory of popular programs, Madison Avenue had a choice. Weaver and, less bossily, CBS, could not compel advertisers to underwrite long, expensive specials. Companies had a choice; some could and did turn to ABC.[81]

Nevertheless, ABC could not take full advantage of its good fortune. Despite some programming successes, ABC had little attraction to national advertisers. ABC's most popular prime-time series attracted interest. But the network's structural disadvantages limited the appeal of other ABC programs. Simply put, ABC did not reach as many homes as CBS or NBC. The third network lacked a comparable number of affiliates of corresponding strength. Advertisers seeking to reach the largest possible audience preferred, all things being equal, to buy time on Columbia or NBC.

ABC's woes could largely be laid at the feet of the FCC. The commission took years to assign third channels in some viewing areas. As a result, ABC normally had to share an affiliation agreement in those two-channel markets. In such situations, stations normally favored either CBS or NBC because each had a larger number of popular programs. More serious, in the long run, was the FCC's misguided reliance on the weaker ultrahigh frequency channels to provide third channels in some midsize markets. Of the three networks, ABC depended most on UHF channels for affiliates.

Advertisers, in effect, undermined the commission's allocation plan. They were not in business to increase network competition. Most were interested in the number of TV homes a network could provide. A network that included too many UHF stations was a national advertiser's third choice. UHF's disadvantages became less pronounced when the total demand for TV time increased and UHF channels were able to compete with VHF stations. But in the 1950s (and 1960s), advertisers had the upper hand; many spurned the UHF channels.[82]

The network most mindful of the FCC's failure was its first victim. As the commission deliberated on the allocation of channels between 1948 and 1952, the Du Mont Network had submitted various plans that would have favored network competition. The Du Mont Plan created more markets with four commercial channels in the same frequency.

But the commission feared that the Du Mont proposal would mean some rural residents would have no television service, a risk the agency would not take. The 1952 allocation plan left Du Mont even more handicapped than ABC. Du Mont shut down in September 1955.

Although the FCC could be blamed in part for Du Mont's departure, any consideration of the structure of American television in the 1950s must recognize the role of advertisers and their agencies. They were not going to subsidize Du Mont or ABC nor many of the UHF stations that came and went after 1952. "Advertisers will not buy UHF when they can buy VHF," wrote Elfred Beck of Tulsa's channel 23. Just over half of the 165 UHF stations that went on the air between mid–1952 and mid–1959 ceased operations, including Beck's station.[83] However much some commentators then and later favored a multiplicity of voices, advertisers were decidedly unmoved by such considerations. Most advertisers cared about how many people saw an individual commercial—not whether their own purchase of ad time enhanced industry competition. Procter and Gamble, wrote one industry reporter, "is guided almost completely by considerations of ratings and cost-per-thousand."[84] Advertisers and their agencies made similar choices in buying space for the print media. In 1956, the decline in advertising revenues compelled the closing of several popular magazines. Other mass periodicals and daily newspapers ended their runs in the 1960s because advertisers found competitors that more efficiently reached their target audiences.[85]

A Nation of Buyers

Timing worked to television's advantage in one regard. The TV boom coincided with an explosion in advertising budgets. Stagnant during the Great Depression and the Second World War, ad billings increased from $2.84 billion in 1945 to $11.96 billion in 1960. *All* of the mass media saw their advertising revenues expand during this period. Newspaper billings, for example, doubled between 1947 and 1955, even as many newspaper subscribers began buying their first televisions.[86]

Companies had a new generation of consumers. A long period of economic growth extended the potential market for a variety of products. Between 1950 and 1960, average white family income increased by 37.7 percent. Reductions in construction costs and the availability of cheaper land, as well as attractive financing options, fostered a housing boom. Between 1940 and 1960, the percentage of Americans owning their own homes rose from 40 to 60 percent. Home ownership in turn

fostered still more consumer activity.[87] Unlike renters, home owners had far more space for household goods. They were also much more likely to own refrigerators, including ones with large freezer compartments. Between 1946 and 1955, refrigerator sales rose 82 percent. This expanded the market for refrigerated and frozen goods. ("Pantry checks" by some market researchers indicated that frozen-food buyers watched a lot of television.) As if to reinforce the observation, a 1951 Frigidaire commercial began, "We're certainly using a lot of frozen foods in our family." The location of much new housing in outlying areas justified the purchase of automobiles; suburban consumers were much less likely to be within walking distance of retailers. New car sales exploded, from 2.1 million in 1946 to 7.9 million nine years later. Indeed, the percentage of families owning two or more cars doubled in the 1950s.[88]

At the same time, changes in grocery retailing created a greater imperative for brand promotion. More and more Americans shopped at large "supermarkets." Although constituting only 5.1 percent of all grocery outlets in 1954, supermarkets accounted for 48 percent of all sales volume. This development posed all sorts of challenges for the national advertiser. Supermarkets sold a wider range of goods than the corner grocery, including magazines and pharmaceuticals. The Jewel chain began selling its own line of cosmetics. With new brands competing with established ones for market share, supermarket managers frequently based their decisions about shelving or promoting brands on advertising. (Laurence Johnson, owner of Syracuse supermarkets, warned those soft on blacklisting that they would lose "hard-won space" in his stores.)[89] "Price and display being equal," remarked the ad agent Fairfax M. Cone, "advertising is the only force outside of the products' inherent qualities that can [affect] this preference."[90]

Postwar advertising, many argued, involved more than hyping brands of toothpaste: to some degree it assured the nation's economic growth and political stability. Mass consumption had to be encouraged, maintained some in and out of government in the 1940s, to prevent another Great Depression and avoid worsening labor relations.[91] Mass advertising, advertising agents like Cone and broadcast executives like Weaver contended, sustained the long economic boom that followed the war. "Television stepped into our economy as the war demands leveled off in 1950," Weaver commented in 1955, "and provided the selling force to galvanize our economy into another explosion upward. We in TV were the major factor in the jump in Gross National Product."[92]

A *Business Week* contributor in 1970 spoke of "TV's phenomenal and unprecedented ability to induce people to buy mass-produced consumer goods. TV had much to do with fueling the economic boom of the 1950s and 1960s."[93]

Such assertions should be treated skeptically. They were often self-serving. Contemporaries like Weaver wanted potential advertisers (and regulators) to regard commercial TV as a positive economic force. Subsequent generations of historians, angry over American culture's materialistic turn, are wont to blame mass advertising.[94] Although this may have been partly true for the later decades of the twentieth century, judgments about the period immediately following the war should be rendered with care.

Most Americans did embark on a long spending spree after 1945, yet they required little encouragement from Madison Avenue or the Department of Commerce. Consumers in the late 1940s and 1950s had very clear memories of shortages and, in the case of those directly affected by the Great Depression, deprivation. David Gelernter described visitors to the New York World's Fair of 1939–40 eagerly awaiting a future of suburban living and automobile ownership.[95] Young men who had spent several years in military service during World War II were all too eager to enjoy material comforts when peace came. An army sergeant told the photographer Margaret Bourke-White that he and his men wanted "a good job—with enough pay so we can buy a home, an automobile, and raise a family. Is that too much to ask?"[96] A woman growing up during the war later wrote of its "*real* effects" on her parents. "The pervasive attitude went something like this: 'We've been through the Depression; we've been through the war. . . . We deserve a good life now. . . . Let's make some money and enjoy ourselves.'"[97]

In that regard, what made mass advertising especially influential after 1945 was not its capacity to create demand, but the expansion of the buying class. Although goods like cigarettes or Florida oranges in the 1920s and 1930s had been pitched to a mass audience, many more were plainly targeted at a smaller percentage of the population. Various studies indicated that vast numbers of Americans could not afford certain goods and services. Advertisers tended to ignore them. They did not qualify for consumer citizenship.[98] After the war, however, the disposable income of more Americans rose. (Perhaps at no time in the country's history was income more evenly distributed than during the postwar period.) Moreover, although all advertising expenditures increased sharply in the

Table 8.1. Network Television Advertising Sales by Industry Group, 1955

Industry group	Amount spent (in millions)	Percent of total
Food	$80.0	19.7
Toiletries	74.2	18.2
Autos	47.1	11.6
Soap	46.0	11.3
Tobacco	42.1	10.3
Household equipment	31.5	7.7
Drugs	23.3	5.7
Miscellaneous	62.7	15.4

Source: Publishers' Information Bureau, *Tide*, 5 May 1956, 30.

three decades following World War II, this expansion was no greater than that for national income.[99]

With a strong postwar economy, many working- and middle-class Americans married earlier and had more children; these younger, adult consumers constituted a market for goods and services that could be promoted on television. And, because they were new to the market, their brand loyalty was in play. They were more willing to try a new product. As one marketing specialist observed, "Younger housewives are easier to educate to an awareness of product and brand; it is easier to get across to the younger housewives the reasons why they should try or buy it; and younger housewives are less fixed in their buying habits and brand loyalty, and will be more inclined to *change* their buying pattern in response to advertising."[100]

Not surprisingly, then, television's biggest time buyers were advertising consumer nondurables like cigarettes and household cleaning supplies. Of the seven largest network advertisers organized by industry in 1955, only two, automotive and household equipment, could be considered big-ticket purchases. And they accounted for only 19.3 percent of the total (see table 8.1). Five of the top seven network advertisers promoted less expensive brand items like toothpaste. "Bristol-Myers' business is good," reported its agency, "but competition in the dentifrice

line is severe."[101] Consumption of such products marked not a shift in buying patterns but a new phase in brand competition that predated the age of television. TV advertising told viewers which cigarettes to smoke. Which tomato paste to cook with. Which car made the driver feel as if she or he were being transported on a rocket (Oldsmobile ran just such an ad).[102] A mother who purchased Snow Crop frozen orange juice, instead of canned juice, was not assuming a new, more material identity. Nor was a father who switched from Lucky Strike to Kool cigarettes. "Most of the sponsoring products are necessities anyway," a Michigan woman wrote in 1957, "and have to be bought, so I buy advertised and brand-name products because you can depend on them." Television, wrote the cultural critic Richard Schickel several years later, "is essentially the medium of the marginally affluent."[103]

9 "Informed without Being Ponderous"

The public has never really shown that it wants broader TV coverage.
John Charles Daly Jr., 1956

When the Korean War began in mid–1950, at least one NBC executive worried that the conflict would adversely affect television. America's intervention, he reasoned, would cause an increase in demand, experienced during World War II, for news. TV consisted essentially of dog acts and one-hour dramas, and very little news programming. Set owners would turn to radio for news updates, and television's audiences would shrink. A network-commissioned survey failed to confirm the executive's hunch. Radio news audiences grew, but at the expense of other radio programming, not television. Radio news' greater number of listeners "has come about by attracting to news a larger number of those who were *already* listening to the radio," concluded Fred Wile of NBC. "Television's share of the total broadcast audience has not declined."[1] Not even a war could slow TV's momentum.

Such research confirmed an assumption widely shared among the networks' managers, that viewers considered television to be an *entertainment* medium in the late 1940s and early 1950s. When asked in 1948 what types of programs New York City's earliest set owners would like to see increased, 65 percent said variety programs; just 7 percent listed news.[2] Seven years later, New Yorkers having televisions listed newspapers as their major source of news. For local news, they preferred daily papers to television 66.7 to 19.8 percent.[3] Most TV news programs struggled to find audiences. "The public has never really shown that it wants broader TV coverage," ABC newsman John Daly remarked late in 1956,

even though "the public has repeatedly been offered fine news shows by every network." Daly was an especially qualified judge. A veteran CBS radio correspondent, he hosted ABC's evening news program; his fame came from hosting *What's My Line?* "It's a matter of great amusement as well as irony to John Charles Daly Jr.," wrote one TV columnist, that he has acquired more reputation and popularity from a half hour quiz show on television than from 19 years of newscasting in radio and TV."[4]

The networks regarded news programming as an obligation produced to placate regulators and impress opinion leaders, as well as those whom Fred Wile called "the sturdy minority who are especially news conscious."[5] They could not be ignored. At the same time, only so much time would be conceded. Nor would substantial sums be invested. Visiting CBS's television news operations in New York City in the late 1940s, CBS Radio news correspondent David Schoenbrun recalled, "I was astonished at the lack of facilities for TV."[6] Entertainment programming was considered to be the lure. Stations and networks aired short, usually fifteen-minute, newscasts. With few exceptions they had small audiences and reluctant advertisers. Half of the 71 stations polled in early 1950 reported losing money on their news programs.[7] When a 1952 survey in areas with high television diffusion rates asked to which medium people would turn to confirm a rumor of war, more than half said radio.[8]

The fifteen-minute newscasts, whether aired by a station or network, were modest productions. Producers had small budgets. In mid–1950, NBC spent $9,000 weekly on its early evening newscast, *The Camel News Caravan.* The cost-per-minute, $120, was far below what the network, or even the thrifty CBS, spent on the vast majority of entertainment programs. The cost-per-minute for *The Philco Playhouse* was $383; *Toast of the Town*, $267.[9]

Local stations were even more economical. Because the FCC reviewed their licenses every three years, stations felt some obligation to telecast news programs. But virtually none was prepared to invest any money in them. Three-fourths of those responding to a 1950 survey did not dedicate a single staff member exclusively to news production. These included stations in Minneapolis and San Francisco, the latter owned by the city's prestige daily, the *Chronicle;* neither initially originated any news programming. Not until early 1952 did all the stations in the nation's largest market, New York City, have 11:00 p.m. newscasts.[10] Those telecasting news programs depended heavily on the Associated Press. When a fire started at a General Electric plant near

Schenectady's station, the news manager peered out the window. "Hey, there's a fire at GE!" he cried. "Get AP on the phone and see if we can get something on it."[11]

The typical telecast consisted most often of an individual, originally dubbed "the commentator," reading headlines. Producers could arrange a live "remote," though even the networks' flagship stations did so sparingly. Instead, photographs or maps were shown to accompany the copy. Sometimes film of an event was presented, with the host offering narration. Film, however, was expensive, and took time to develop and edit. (One film editor cut the film with his teeth.)[12] Schenectady's station had one cameraman; he dried his film on a string tied between two saw horses. "It would take all afternoon," remembered a colleague.[13] In 1948 WPIX scooped its rivals in filming a woman jumping out the window of the Russian consulate. As the veteran CBS newsman Ed Bliss noted, that station needed "only" three hours and ten minutes to deliver, process, script, and edit the footage for telecasting.[14]

There were other problems. Cameras were bulky. An early RCA model weighed fifty-three pounds. Other technical challenges beset the video reporters. On a European trip in 1951, Gene Jones of NBC used an Auricon sound camera that had to be reloaded every three minutes. "It was appalling that during every single interview we did with a chief of state, we would have to hold up and say, 'We have to reload.' They were often not amused. [Marshall] Tito [of Yugoslavia] was quite angry." Moreover, Jones recalled, "the person doing the interview had to hold the microphone, ask the questions, and sometimes even hold the light." During one session, a light bulb fell on the head of British prime minister Clement Atlee.[15] Crews could inflict other damage. Preparing to originate a telecast from the White House, one network crew blew the power in the executive mansion.[16]

Given the ordeals of securing footage, TV news producers most often aired whatever film they had. "In those uncritical days," one NBC correspondent recalled, "television news was not news unless you could prove it on film."[17] This tendency gave many newscasts the look of the motion picture newsreels. With the exception of *The March of Time*, their news agenda was decidedly opportunistic. The availability of footage, not its newsworthiness, explained its inclusion. Jack Gould of the *New York Times* went further, asserting that TV's first news producers simply overvalued the visual. He accused NBC's *Camel News Caravan* of "a consistent tendency to play up pictures for their own sake, irrespective

of whether they are really newsworthy." Overall, "much of television news is a sort of half-baked marriage between radio news and newsreels."[18]

Sometimes there were scoops. On June 30, 1956, two airliners collided and crashed over the Grand Canyon, leaving 128 dead. NBC happened to have a news crew, including cameraman Dexter Alley, at the Hoover Dam. Rushing to the scene, Alley persuaded rescue personnel to allow him to accompany them to the crash scene on July 1; he shot several hundred feet of film, some of which aired the next day on *The Today Show*.[19] Later that month, virtually all news services were able to film or photograph the slow sinking of the Italian luxury liner *Andrea Doria*. Its proximity—the ship collided with another liner off Nantucket—and clear weather eased the task of getting to the site. Again, *Today* presented the first footage of the sinking ship. Though they arrived late, CBS's Douglas Edwards, his young producer, Don Hewitt, and cameraman Tony Petri ended up ahead of the pack. While their competitors, including those at NBC, rushed home to develop their film, Petri managed to capture the *Andrea Doria* actually going down.[20] It was a great triumph for Edwards and Hewitt, and, at the time, exceptional. Location and luck trumped the frustrations of using film, allowing them to provide visual imagery that would be routine several decades later.

The absence of footage invited inventiveness. On Washington's WTOP early evening newscast in 1950, Walter Cronkite tried to show a drought in Kansas by placing a powerful studio light behind a map of the state. The map caught fire.[21] To report on the Soviet Union's first space satellite, Don Hewitt of CBS attached a cloth golf ball to a coat hanger.[22]

Not surprisingly, well-known radio newsmen were reluctant to enter television. CBS president Frank Stanton had to persuade a very hesitant Douglas Edwards to do a television newscast. He became anchor of *CBS Evening News* in 1949. And Edwards, though a competent news reader, hardly ranked with Columbia's most well regarded correspondents. A year later, NBC hired Reuven Frank, an editor at the *Newark Evening News*, because the network's radio writers and producers refused to do TV work.[23]

The lack of enthusiasm for network newscasts extended to affiliates. In the 1950s, many station managers regarded news programming as a money-loser. Early evening and late night newscasts were usually fifteen minutes. Some did manage to become popular in certain markets,

including Des Moines, Minneapolis–St. Paul, and Columbus, Ohio.[24] More often, stations attracted viewers by offering two types of programming: kids' shows or old feature films and syndicated filmed series for adults. Such fare in the mid–1950s usually won the local ratings wars. In late 1956, NBC's New York City station successfully slated the syndicated series *Highway Patrol* at 7:00 p.m. against news on some other channels. The temptation to earn more money with such programs caused some affiliates not to carry the network newscasts. In May 1956, affiliates in Boston, Charlotte, Cincinnati, Dayton, Detroit, Omaha, San Diego, and St. Louis, among others, did not clear *The CBS Evening News.* Of Columbia's fifty-two basic required affiliates, twelve did not air the newscasts; all carried *Burns and Allen*, *Climax*, and *I Love Lucy.* All but two telecast the CBS cartoon program *Mighty Mouse*.[25]

Other news shows had even more difficulty attracting viewers. The networks relegated most news programs to Sunday afternoons (the "Sunday ghetto" as it came to be known), when the audience for television was considered slight. The Sunday ghetto, Reuven Frank remembered, "bridged the gap between Sunday dinner and expensive entertainment, while few watched and fewer paid attention." A study of the 1959–60 season suggested that about 40 percent of all information and public affairs programming aired on New York City's seven commercial stations appeared on Sundays before 6:00 p.m.[26]

Emulating a radio rule, the networks offered much of their earliest news programs as sustaining programming, that is, unsponsored. On Sunday, April 15, 1951, NBC's schedule began at 1:30 p.m. The first five programs were sustaining. Five years later, NBC's Sunday programming commenced at noon; but no sponsored program aired until 4:00 p.m.[27] Affiliates were under no obligations to carry such fare. During the last quarter of 1955, for example, WSAZ in Huntington, West Virginia, preempted all network offerings in favor of religious programming and an amateur talent show as well as Cleveland Browns football. A WSAZ executive cited "tremendous local interest in this series."[28]

News Events as Programming

During television's earliest years, special telecasts often populated the airwaves and, on a few occasions, commanded large audiences. In April 1949, a three-and-a-half-year-old girl, Kathy Fiscus, fell into a well near her San Marino, California, home. In an unprecedented twenty-seven-hour telecast, a camera crew from Los Angeles's KTTV

covered the frantic, ultimately unsuccessful, rescue efforts. The story fascinated viewers. "Lines of spectators were 15 deep at some store windows where television sets were operating," reported the *Los Angeles Times*.[29] Police saw the future clearly enough. "The television technicians received the run of the place," reported *Editor and Publisher*; while newspaper reporters and photographers "were ushered out of police lines sometimes with guns stuck in their ribs."[30]

In New York City, anxious network programmers could not anticipate any area children falling into a well—or an abandoned subway tunnel. They looked east, slightly, to the United Nations. Both NBC and Columbia aired sessions of the UN. Doing so had several short-term advantages. As with prizefights, no sets had to be constructed; the stage was ready-made. It was also close. The UN designated New York its headquarters city and temporarily operated in Queens while its campus was constructed on Manhattan's east side. Then, too, the UN had broad public support in the late 1940s; many Americans regarded the UN as an American institution, a legacy of Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt. In August 1947, 85 percent of those polled by Gallup favored the organization.[31] NBC cosponsored UN Week in 1948, and *UN Stamp Club*, a kids' program, aired in early 1951 on Saturday afternoons.[32]

The UN originations brought into focus the intense rivalry between the two major networks. CBS struck a deal with the UN in 1949, winning exclusive rights to telecast its proceedings daily, at hours (11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.) when the network had no other programming; the Ford Motor Company sponsored their production. The deal infuriated NBC executives who had not realized the world body would allow advertising. The UN proceedings possessed news value and should not be auctioned to one network.[33]

The UN telecasts soon left the air as CBS developed daytime programming that drew more viewers and advertisers. NBC similarly filled its schedule. "Future UN television coverage on NBC," the network staff concluded late in 1950, will not be as regular as in the past, but will be handled on the basis of special news values." The network slated one UN report at midnight.[34] And the appeal of airing a UN session or any other news event during prime time disappeared. More—in time, much more—money could be made with entertainment shows. Only in exceptional circumstances did either Columbia or NBC telecast a UN meeting.[35] But their distant rivals, ABC and Du Mont, still had largely

vacant daytime schedules (both, in truth, had difficulty filling their *evening* schedules). In 1951 and 1954, both ABC and Du Mont found two political "series"—two important Senate proceedings—worth carrying.

Early in 1951, individual stations started telecasting hearings of the Senate Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime, chaired by Senator Estes Kefauver of Tennessee. Although neither house of Congress allowed the broadcasting of their sessions, individual committees had since the 1930s occasionally permitted their proceedings to be aired.[36] Several congressional hearings had been televised in the late 1940s, including the House Un-American Activities Committee's inquiry into espionage charges against the former State Department official Alger Hiss.[37] These represented relatively short preludes to what was to come. As the Kefauver committee prepared to hold a hearing in New Orleans, a local station, WDSU, the city's only channel, secured permission from Kefauver to telecast an hour of the session. The cost to the station would be modest. The station did not sign on until 10:00 a.m., and it aired a test pattern until 1:30. Despite little publicity, the payoff was immediate. Unlike earlier televised proceedings, the Kefauver committee's casting call included various local mobsters and officials. As the committee moved to other cities—Detroit, San Francisco, and Los Angeles—stations in each city followed WDSU's precedent. In each community, daytime TV viewing rose sharply.[38]

When the committee came to New York, the notoriety of the witnesses, including a former mayor, prompted ABC, Du Mont, and several local stations to carry the proceedings. The two networks' altruism was calculated. Both were already paying AT&T for their network connection, despite offering no programming. And *Time* magazine sponsored ABC's telecast.[39] At the same time, the hearings themselves played to stereotypes of the mobster. The virtuous Kefauver calmly cross-examined various underworld figures. Perhaps the most arresting image came during the testimony of Frank Costello, who refused to allow cameras to show his face. They focused instead on his hands. "Ingenious technicians," wrote the critic Robert Lewis Shayon, "had covered their star from the neck down, catching his eloquent hands as they twirled a pair of horn-rimmed glasses, circled a water glass, or drummed a tattoo on the courtroom table." Shayon could not contain his enthusiasm. "Television's mighty technological revolution continues apace. But with the United States Senate outdoing Alfred Hitchcock—where will it end?"[40]

Between 20 and 30 million Americans watched one or more sessions. In New York City, 70 percent of all TV homes viewed at least one Kefauver committee telecast; more than twice as many New Yorkers tuned in the hearings compared with the Yankees-Phillies World Series the previous fall. Housewives formed listening clubs; others put off shopping until the committee quit for lunch, causing butchers to complain of huge lines during the recess period. A Chicago motion picture theater offered a 10 percent discount when the hearings aired.[41] Not everyone identified with Kefauver and his colleagues. Gangsters, observing the proceedings on a set at the Tasty Shop on Cleveland's East Side, cheered recalcitrant participants. A young man working the counter recalled, "the mobsters watching would regularly cheer when a witness snarled his answer or even refused to talk." They hailed Costello for not allowing his face to be shown.[42] Overall, however, most viewers sided with the goo-goos. Although NBC refrained from airing the hearings, it closely monitored comic sketches on the network's variety shows—and censored at least one—satirizing the proceedings. They must not be disrespectful. Several of the inquisitors seized on their momentary celebrity. Committee counsel Rudolph Halley won election as New York City council president. And Kefauver ran a strong race for the 1952 Democratic presidential nomination. He was, one historian later observed, "the first American politician to be catapulted into national prominence by television."[43]

That so many Americans followed the hearings suggested a mass interest in representative government. Perhaps TV could fulfill a democratic purpose—and revitalize democracy. Television, wrote John Crosby, "has contributed not only to popular enlightenment but, more importantly, to public maturity."[44] "The American people," wrote Shayon, "have had a profound community experience in the Kefauver hearings. The event has revived in some measure the ancient, original form of Athenian democracy, in which all citizens of Athens participated directly in public affairs. The excitement of sitting in intimate judgment on the officially exalted and the glamorously corrupt, and the thrill of having powerful figures, customarily remote or mysterious, make personal account to the viewers, each has been exhilarating."[45]

Such sentiments were based more on wishful thinking. The big-city bias to TV ownership probably inflated viewer interest in the hearings, which emphasized criminal activities in the largest urban areas. (Not coincidentally, one of Broadway's most popular musicals in 1951 was

Guys and Dolls, concerning a far more charming and less threatening class of criminals.) The hearings' focus on organized crime explained their high ratings, *Commonweal* suspected, just as bizarre murders sold tabloid newspapers.[46] "Good and evil, heroes and villains, black and white categorization," a Kefauver biographer acknowledged, "made each specific encounter between the committee and witness easy to follow."[47] By comparison, the vast majority of congressional proceedings made for dull programming, only slightly more appealing than the test pattern. Columbia and NBC were not about to drop promising daytime programming for the hearings, despite complaints from some affiliates.[48] Although agreeing to televise individual proceedings "where in our opinion the material is particularly newsworthy," NBC TV's senior executives concluded that "we should avoid getting into a position of undertaking to devote any designated amount of time regularly to this type of coverage."[49] ABC and Du Mont would be hard-pressed to find future congressional hearings that matched the theatrical qualities of the Kefauver proceedings.

Nevertheless, another congressional "series" aired three years later. In the spring of 1954 a Senate committee held hearings on charges by Senator Joseph R. McCarthy Jr., Republican from Wisconsin. McCarthy had become the nation's most prominent and reckless crusader against the presence of Communists in government. Appearances on TV interview programs like NBC's *Meet the Press* between 1950 and 1954, the historian Michael Kazin speculated, may have helped to boost his national standing. When McCarthy spoke during an afternoon session of the 1952 Republican convention, all four networks telecast his address.[50] His following began to decline after he accused the army of inadequate internal security procedures. The Senate Government Operations Committee subsequently held televised hearings into McCarthy's allegations. Because of the rapid diffusion of television between 1951 and 1954, many more Americans could observe, for the first time, a congressional committee at work. Remarked the executive of a Belleville, Illinois, station that carried the hearings, "We get calls from women that have formed parties that want to see the hearings; and while you might think it was because it might be sensational, I think you hear so many remarks [because] they at last get a chance to see their government in action."[51]

Yet the hearings did not prove as popular as the Kefauver sessions. The sessions were being viewed in about 10 percent of all TV homes

compared with the 32 percent share Kefauver's panel had accrued. Although the stakes for the nation were far greater, McCarthy and the army witnesses simply were not as compelling as the gangsters who had appeared before Kefauver's panel. Nor did the committee, beginning with chairman Karl Mundt, possess the video appeal of Kefauver and his colleagues. Although the first telecast generated relatively high ratings, within a day the proceedings turned dull and most viewers lost interest. The once substantial audience began "turning off its TV receivers and heading back to the office or the unwashed dishes in the kitchen," observed *Variety*. "The production has lacked the wallop necessary for good box office."[52] In St. Louis, viewers overwhelmingly preferred their regular programming to the McCarthy proceedings. When KSD compromised by airing a special summary program at 10:15 p.m., then 11:15 p.m., critical calls followed. "We want relaxation, not the McCarthy Hearing," one remarked. "If you must have it on, put it on after 12:00 o'clock. I paid $400 for my television set." Concluded KSD's station manager, "It is obvious that we cannot continue the 11:15 delayed film coverage for an indefinite period and in view of the disgusted attitude of the television set owners and the public generally, my recommendation is that we discontinue the 11:15 telecast."[53]

Relatively few stations aired the proceedings. CBS, with a strong daytime schedule, refused to carry any of the hearings; after several days, NBC dropped them. Because Mundt disallowed and then restricted any advertising, none of the money lost from canceling regular programming would have been recovered. Four days of hearings cost NBC approximately $260,000. The only two networks to carry the hearings, ABC and Du Mont, had no daytime programming to sacrifice. ABC still lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in production expenses and declined, because of the added charge, to carry the proceedings to affiliates beyond Denver. In Los Angeles, viewers had to settle for an independent station's live sound feed accompanied by still photographs.[54] ABC and Du Mont affiliates in such markets as Baltimore, Boston, and Denver either dropped the sessions or refused to carry them altogether. Some split the difference, like WXEL in Cleveland, which occasionally bumped the afternoon sessions to air Cleveland Indians baseball games.[55]

Understandably, then, the hearings had less impact on McCarthy than many contemporaries realized. The Wisconsin senator's public approval ratings were already falling, from 50 percent in December 1953

to 38 percent in March, a month before the committee began its deliberations. The hearings failed to restore the senator's former standing. He behaved badly, misidentifying and bullying witnesses. His approval score had dipped to 34 percent as the committee prepared to adjourn in June; those with an "unfavorable" opinion of McCarthy had risen to 45 percent.[56] In that regard, McCarthy's TV appearances empowered his critics. Most had overestimated his hold. Television exposed him as a small-time pol not to be feared. "I thought of legislators as demigods who were a lot smarter than the rest of us," a viewer recalled. "What a revelation to realize that these people were mere mortals like the rest of us."[57]

The Army-McCarthy Hearings, as they came to be called, offered a lesson in TV's effects. Although the vast majority of Americans took in relatively few of the sessions, the nation's opinion leadership watched enough to believe the senator was committing political suicide. That leadership in turn confused its own fascination with the proceeding with the nation's.

After 1954, congressional hearings rarely gained substantial airtime on any network. Du Mont went dark in 1955 and ABC gradually launched a profitable daytime schedule. Airing congressional proceedings became the financial sacrifice it had become for Columbia and NBC. Not until 1966, when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee launched an ambitious inquiry into the United States's Vietnam policy, would any network dedicate substantial daytime airtime to congressional hearings.

This financial calculus enraged Jack Gould of the *New York Times.* Not given to the righteous indignation that animated some of his fellow industry reporters, Gould nevertheless lashed out at the networks in 1956, when they refused to telecast critical UN Security Council debates over the Suez crisis. None of the networks would cancel their programming to air the sessions, some of which inconveniently occurred in the evening. That the crisis itself might cause a third world war was less important than the revenues lost. "The national electronic communications system made an absolute mockery of its obligation to serve the public interest," Gould wrote. "It was stupid, selfish and irresponsible."[58]

The UN fiasco also indicated that no relief could be found from the Big Two's competitors. ABC's altruism declined as it frantically sought to become more competitive. In June 1954, just weeks after its Mc-

Carthy hearings commitment, ABC canceled virtually all of its regular news programs. Only two remained. For the remainder of the decade, competition between CBS and NBC essentially set the direction of television journalism.[59]

"Damned If I Didn't Stay Up until 3 a.m."

All the networks honored one public service commitment: the telecasting of the national party conventions. Radio had offered extensive coverage since 1924. In 1948, with the TV boom just under way, the networks telecast the Republican and Democratic conventions. Both parties agreed to meet in the same city, Philadelphia, to reduce the networks' production costs and paid for the construction of temporary studios. In exchange, most of the proceedings were aired, days and evenings; NBC devoted fifty-four hours to televising the Republican convention alone, and twenty-two hours to the meeting of the new and controversial Progressive party. The two major parties similarly agreed to gather in Chicago for their 1952 meetings, and to hold them at the Chicago Amphitheater, which the networks preferred, rather than the larger Chicago Stadium. The gesture denied five thousand seats to the party faithful.[60] In 1952, the Republican convention netted some seventy-one hours of coverage (the three-network average) and the Democratic gathering just over seventy-four hours. Because of background reports and human interest stories, the total network coverage exceeded the lengths of both party meetings. One indicator of the conclaves' airtime involved Betty Furness, who did Westinghouse ads on CBS at both conventions. Furness appeared in 160 commercials, totaling four hours. She was so ubiquitous (and well-received) that some suggested one of the parties nominate her for vice president.[61]

The coverage was not, strictly speaking, gavel-to-gavel. NBC cut away from its telecasts of the 1948 conventions to air *Howdy Doody* most nights, as well as a prizefight. Still, NBC president Niles Trammell personally directed the boxing match producers to provide viewers with convention updates.[62] CBS similarly had to honor a commitment to air a baseball game. Four years later, NBC carried baseball's All Star game instead of an afternoon session of the Republican convention.[63]

The conventions possessed news value in the 1940s and 1950s. Although many states held primaries, they had limited impact on the nomination process. "All these primaries are just eyewash," President Truman remarked.[64] Indeed, the outcome was frequently in doubt when

the delegates gathered. Multiple-balloting was common. The 1940 Republican nominee had been chosen on the sixth ballot; the 1948 candidate, on the third. Even when the presidential nomination was all but certain, as for the Democrats in 1948, fierce debates over the party platform, notably on civil rights, could create news.[65]

There were other advantages to the networks. Televising the party meetings played to the egos of politicians attending them. NBC lost approximately $25,000 telecasting the 1948 conventions (with radio still the dominant medium, the losses for NBC Radio were $305,000). Yet the public relations benefits to telecasting the 1948 conventions were obvious to Reuven Frank of NBC News. "The two major party conventions would include every official, every legislator, every regulator who could shape a radio or television company's right to exist."[66] In 1956, NBC News invited all state delegation chairmen to give filmed reports that the network distributed for local affiliates' newscasts.[67] The goodwill of the political class could affect congressional oversight of the FCC or of the industry itself. Convention airtime just might lessen concerns over some aspects of broadcasting.

Advertisers supported the networks' electronic civics class. *Life* magazine sponsored NBC's 1948 coverage (for $150,000) and lavishly promoted their telecast. At the same time, while NBC maintained ultimate editorial control, the popular weekly provided writers to help report on the conventions. "We just do not have a large enough staff," one NBC executive admitted, "to cover such events in a really big way." Recalled one NBC director, *Life* reporters "had all the contacts." *Life*'s fashion editor cohosted a fifteen-minute segment on the hats worn by female delegates and politicians.[68] Westinghouse underwrote CBS's 1952 telecasts, an essential gesture. "It was also perfectly obvious," Sig Mickelson of CBS News recalled, "that we were going to have to be able to sell commercials in order to do it all." Columbia built a special kitchen set at the Chicago Amphitheater to permit Betty Furness to demonstrate Westinghouse appliances. The parties had the right to reject sponsors and insisted that their underwriting of the convention coverage implied no endorsement of their products.[69]

That the conventions occurred in the summer also benefited the networks and affiliates. The summer months were the hardest sell for TV sales representatives. Better weather in much of the country as well as vacations caused the total viewing audience to shrink during the summer. NBC did not earn money in July until 1955. A station owner was

surprised to learn that the preemption of all programming for the 1956 conventions cost his Charlotte station only $672 in revenue.[70]

The televising of the 1948 and 1952 conventions intrigued Americans. Ninety-two percent of New York City set owners surveyed indicated that they viewed at least one telecast of the 1948 meetings; though an overwhelmingly Democratic sample, 53 percent indicated they watched eight or more hours of the Republican convention. The "'teley' took us to the convention hall, the best view in the place," wrote a Time Inc. editor after watching the first night of the 1948 GOP convention.[71] "Millions of men and women are at this very hour watching the proceedings of this assembly," Vice President Alben W. Barkley reminded delegates to the Democratic convention four years later.[72] In fact, Nielsen data indicated that the conventions drew larger audiences in 1952 than the previous weeks' programming except for the most popular prime-time series. In the evenings, the GOP earned a respectable 43.0 rating while the Democrats had to settle for a 32.0 score. A southwestern Ohio survey similarly suggested high viewer interest.[73] Political junkies were especially enthusiastic. "I never thought I would ever do it; but damned if I didn't stay up until 3 a.m. last night (or this morning) watching the Democratic convention jamboree on TV," wrote the former New Deal administrator David E. Lilienthal. "It was a terrific experience."[74]

Those observing Barkley and others in 1952 had little choice. In most markets, viewers could only select from network-affiliated stations honor-bound to carry the proceedings. Set owners could either observe the conventions or turn off their sets. Revealingly, when CBS was contractually obligated to carry a baseball game during the 1948 Democratic convention, the sports telecast drew the highest rating; in New York City, WCBS had a higher rating than the other four stations combined.[75] Not every viewer wanted a civics lesson. Yet the 1948 and 1952 proceedings were diverting enough to make the telecasts worthwhile to the companies underwriting them. "While the audience measurement services did not place the conventions on a par with 'I Love Lucy,'" concluded one political scientist, "the sponsors nevertheless secured solid, nationwide attention for their products over a protracted period of time."[76]

The convention telecasts themselves invited much improvisation. At the 1948 Republican convention, a CBS reporter persuaded five female members of the Hawaiian delegation to sing for ten minutes.[77] Four years later, an NBC newsman asked a horse to indicate, by stomping his

foot, how many ballots would be needed to nominate the Republican candidate.[78] On at least one occasion, a director's desire for an impressive visual image overtook accuracy. On cue from an NBC director, southern Democratic delegates at the 1948 meeting tossed their badges on a table and declared they were leaving the convention. With the camera off, they retrieved their badges and returned to the hall. They were angry at their northern brethren but not, as the camera implied, about to bolt the party. The director, Gilbert Seldes observed, "had illustrated the way in which the great instrument for conveying the simple truth can be subdued to the uses of accepted faking."[79] During the 1952 conventions, directors did more intercutting between speakers and delegates to increase the coverage's visual appeal. At the Republican meeting, a camera caught the dignified party secretary, Katherine Howard of Massachusetts, slipping off her shoes while seated near the podium. This was then an act of informality only performed at home among close family members. Mrs. Howard became known as "Shoeless Katie."[80] An audacious ABC crew, denied access to a caucus of the Louisiana delegation at the Democratic convention that year, placed a camera with a special lens on a small knothole in a wall separating them from the delegates. "For four minutes," ABC bragged, "they presented the 'candid camera' actions of the delegation." A monitor of the networks' performance dubbed it "perhaps the most bizarre of the caucus coverages."[81] Covering the 1956 GOP meeting in San Francisco, *Today* had to originate live at 4:00 a.m. Pacific Time to accommodate eastern time zone viewers. Not surprisingly, *Today*'s producers had trouble booking guests; one morning they settled for an appearance by Miss Effie, a hula-dancing elephant from the Oakland Zoo.[82]

Notwithstanding such antics, the convention telecasts were normally circumspect. Prominent speakers were always shown, even if it meant cutting away from an interview. At the 1952 Democratic convention, an NBC reporter had assembled three southern governors to discuss a proposed rule intended to compel their fealty to the national ticket. But midway through the interview, director William McAndrew ordered the cameras switched to Representative Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr., who was about to nominate Averell Harriman for president. "I had no alternative," McAndrew recalled. "I just had to wind up the governors and switch to the nominating speech."[83]

Such addresses were largely unmediated. Senior correspondents in special booths anchoring the network coverage tended to avoid com-

ment. An exhaustive study of the 1952 conventions concluded that "none of the networks exhibited any degree of bias; the performers worked in the realm of objective reporting and carefully qualified expertise."[84] They understood that the convention participants, and not those covering it, were the center of attention. They were honoring past practice. Remarks came only in the absence of speech making or other action. Reporters and anchors were "pause interpreters," *Literary Digest* reported in 1936, "eliminating the embarrassing lulls."[85]

When commentary came, it could often be misleading. Gladys Lang's close examination of the three networks' coverage of the 1952 conventions suggested that video's first journalists hardly covered themselves in glory. When the proceedings turned chaotic, network reporters had to provide instant analysis, which could be off the mark. The camera itself, by focusing on certain participants—and being unable to cover behind-the-scenes maneuvers—could distort viewers' understanding of the proceedings. Excessive attention to the antics of one governor at the Republican convention inflated his importance. At the Democratic gathering, the networks closely followed President Truman's appearance and, in effect, overstated his role in the final balloting.[86]

Lang's post hoc "grading" of the networks undervalued their achievement. In contrast to their disdainful colleagues writing for newspapers and magazines, whose accounts partly formed the basis for Lang's evaluation, TV reporters and producers had to make split-second decisions about what was transpiring and why. "It's like putting out a newspaper day after day," CBS producer Fred W. Friendly commented, "except it's live."[87] The logistical headaches were enormous. Cameras lacked easy portability. Despite such handicaps, the networks were capable of bringing order to the often chaotic proceedings. "The citizen in his home," an NBC vice president remarked, "had a more complete and accurate picture of what was going on than many of the delegates on the floor."[88] Attending his first convention, the Democrats' 1956 gathering, the historian Daniel Boorstin found the events on the floor very hard to follow. He and his sons "spent our time watching the television screens which the arrangements committee had considerately placed there. These sets showed us precisely the same programs we would have seen from our living room."[89]

By 1956, interest in the conventions had begun to waver. Although the total audiences increased, this was entirely explained by the dramatic increase in the number of television homes between 1952 and

1956. One survey indicated that viewers watched less TV during the two weeks the networks telecast the conventions. This preference was partly due to the lack of drama at the two meetings. Compared to earlier meetings, the 1956 conventions were dull affairs. Both Eisenhower and Stevenson were renominated, as expected. Stevenson enlivened the Democratic convention by leaving the selection of his running mate to the delegates. Yet even this unorthodoxy could not compensate for hours of tired partisanship. "One thing became clear," the *Nation*'s TV critic wrote of the coverage, "where there is no story, there is no interest."[90]

Despite the conventions' waning news value, NBC in particular saw secondary benefits in covering them extensively. They were an opportunity to promote the network's news division. In innumerable press releases to TV columnists, who had relatively little to report during the summer, NBC hailed the news division's correspondents and analysts and their use of the latest RCA technology. In 1952, NBC introduced a new, relatively portable TV camera dubbed "walkie-lookie." It could be used by correspondents on the convention floor. Cynical newspaper competitors nicknamed it the "creepie-peepie." Worse, the device did not always work.[91]

The Age of Murrow

NBC labored to overcome a common perception. Columbia had emerged from World War II with the best regarded broadcast news division. In the late 1930s, CBS had assembled an impressive corps of reporters and analysts. It offered the most impressive coverage of the global conflict. Wrote the historian Dixon Wecter, "The ribbon for overseas reporting of this war goes to Columbia."[92] And no CBS correspondent had more prestige than Edward R. Murrow. In Great Britain when the war began, Murrow covered the air raids on London. Carried live, his broadcasts, from atop the BBC building, allowed Americans to experience the horror of hearing the British capital burning. "Edward R. Murrow, more than anyone else," wrote an editor years later, "created the first living-room war."[93]

Murrow's delivery made his broadcasts especially effective. His deep, low voice had special authority. In the event of a nuclear war, Civil Defense hoped to use Murrow (or Arthur Godfrey) to alert the nation.[94] As instructed by his favorite and most influential college teacher at Washington State College, he spoke slowly. Then, too, Murrow, unlike some network commentators back in New York, practiced plain speech.[95] He

did not pepper his observations with learned allusions that might be lost on some listeners. Everyone could understand Ed Murrow. "I stood on a hill watching an airdrome being bombed two miles away," he told listeners in August 1940. "It looked and sounded like farmers blasting stumps in western Washington. You forget entirely that there are men down there on the ground. Even when the dive bombers come down looking like a duck with both wings broken and you hear the hollow grunt of their bombs, it doesn't seem to have much meaning. It's almost impossible to realize that men are killing and being killed."[96]

Murrow's attitude toward information added to his reputation. Murrow defined news with great seriousness. This set him apart from those radio newsmen stateside who had always mixed it up—the fall of Ethiopia followed by singing pets. Separating himself from such flippancy made Murrow appear to be a true journalist, worth comparing to the best newspaper and magazine reporters. Murrow maintained his standing after the war, doing radio commentary for CBS from New York.

Murrow and other senior radio newsmen regarded television warily. Murrow told a colleague he wished TV had never been invented. Radio news had come to provide them prestige and nice incomes. They were put off, like so many established entertainers, by television's at times primitive production values. And who wanted to wear makeup? "We felt it was kind of unmanly to go on TV and perform," recalled CBS's Howard K. Smith. Their initial reluctance to appear on the medium allowed the less proud, including Douglas Edwards, David Brinkley, and Walter Cronkite, to establish themselves as video journalists.[97]

Murrow had the good looks for the home screen, but he lacked the enthusiasm. He had helped to anchor CBS's telecasts of the 1948 national party conventions. Performing live, however, revealed his inability to ad-lib, as well as a performance anxiety best controlled by having a script. At the end of one GOP session, John Crosby described Murrow "looking wilted, bored and exhausted."[98] Still, the Kefauver hearings impressed Murrow. Television might hold the journalistic promise he had helped to establish with radio. In 1951, he told *Newsweek*, "There are new and great possibilities in TV."[99] Nevertheless, Murrow was fussy about his video vehicle. He declined offers to anchor CBS's early evening newscast and the 1952 party conventions.[100]

Murrow preferred to appear on *his* show, one that he coproduced and scripted. And he based his video vehicle on a radio program. In the late 1940s, Murrow had begun a collaboration with Fred W. Friendly,

a young radio producer. Friendly and Murrow had launched an hour-long program, *Hear It Now*, for CBS Radio in 1950. *Hear It Now* was no summary of the week's news. Rather, it consisted of different reports recorded on magnetic tape, a far superior transcription method. Murrow hosted the program. *Hear It Now* became the model for *See It Now*, which debuted in November 1951.[101]

Critics lavished praise on Murrow's program. *See It Now* had the polish and professionalism absent in the slapdash newscasts. The first program, advantaging itself of the completion of the coaxial cable to California, began with shots of the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans. "This simple trick," John Crosby wrote, brought "home to the viewers the wonder of this electronic miracle."[102] "It is the best program of its kind that I have ever watched," judged Harriet Van Horne of the *New York World-Telegram and Sun*. "Mr. Murrow's technique is to review the week's news in terms of the people who made it. He doesn't tell you what [British Foreign Affairs Minister] Anthony Eden told the U.N. General Assembly; he shows you Mr. Eden making that speech."[103] Indeed, the producers, as CBS accountants soon discovered, relished filmed remotes. One spring 1952 program featured footage from Korea; Berlin; Lexington, Virginia; Gary, Indiana; Washington, D.C.; and Climax, Colorado. "News on television can consist of more than a man behind a desk describing a few stills and newsreel clips," *Newsweek* cheered. "It can take the viewers to the news."[104] Murrow, Crosby argued, offered "an almost entirely new form of journalism."[105]

Three weeks after its premiere, *See It Now* had a sponsor, the aluminum behemoth Alcoa. A 1949 survey suggested that Alcoa's image needed burnishing. Like some other large companies, Alcoa had antitrust anxieties. "Alcoa's problem was hardly unique," wrote *Business Week* in late 1953. "Unlike the proverbial fat man, whom everybody is supposed to love, the [corporate] giant has an inherent popularity problem." By then, a historian of the company referred to "what had become a permanent preoccupation with antitrust matters." Alcoa self-consciously targeted not the mass of television viewers, but those opinion leaders—legislators, regulators, journalists, and shareholders—assumed to be Murrow fans. "We wanted a show to capture the thought leaders," remarked Alcoa vice president Arthur P. Hall. Murrow was, in fact, the selling point for Alcoa. "First, because he's believable; second, because he's a personality," explained Hall. Despite a considerable investment, about $2 million annually or close to one-third of its

total promotional budget, Alcoa took special care *not* to interfere with the production of *See It Now*. "I have a wonderful arrangement with my sponsor," Murrow told *TV Guide*. "They make aluminum and I make film." Alcoa even occasionally sacrificed one of its commercials when the production ran over its allotted length (which occurred six times during one season). The company had cause to be pleased with its investment. A survey indicated that *See It Now* was popular among members of Congress and the federal bureaucracy; 87 percent of viewers polled identified Alcoa as the sponsor. Just over a third recalled the content of the commercials.[106]

Nevertheless, Alcoa did not cover all of *See It Now*'s costs. Its extensive use of filmed reports greatly boosted the program's expenses. *See It Now* was budgeted at $23,000 a week, though some programs ran up to $100,000. Its cost-per-minute ranged from $767 to $3,333. Compared to their fellow pioneers in video journalism, Friendly and his colleagues were perfectionists. They used 35-mm rather than 16-mm film; their film shot to used ratio sometimes reached 20 to 1.[107] Murrow thought nothing of sending a crew overseas on short notice, regardless of the expense. He insisted, moreover, on having more than one film crew assigned to the program. "If I wanted more than one camera crew," he told the *New Yorker*, "I'd damn well get more than one camera crew." He had five in late 1953.[108]

Despite *See It Now*'s high production costs, CBS first scheduled the program on Sunday afternoons. It resided in the so-called Sunday ghetto where the networks deposited much of their usually inexpensive cultural and informational programming, and few watched. "It's always a mystery to me," Murrow mused, "why a person, any civilized person, would be sitting at home on a Sunday afternoon watching television."[109]

See it Now initially consisted of multiple reports. Most were serious, but Murrow and Friendly carried features on the restoration of colonial Williamsburg and the manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers. In that regard, *See It Now* in its first two seasons anticipated Columbia's far more financially successful news "magazine," *60 Minutes*. *See It Now*, Ed Bliss recalled, was "distinguished by its immediacy and imagination, not by its bite. . . . Its topics were largely noncontroversial."[110]

See It Now secured a new, more desirable time slot and assumed a new structure. In September 1953, CBS moved *See It Now* to Tuesday evenings at 10:30. At the same time, the program underwent a transfor-

mation: Friendly and Murrow began favoring a documentary approach. That is, more productions explored single issues. This was a risky strategy. Attending to only one "story" allowed more in-depth reporting, which impressed critics. But viewers greatly outnumbered the nation's TV columnists. And set owners preferred, as *60 Minutes*'s huge following subsequently indicated, shorter accounts. Murrow himself had misgivings about attending to just one subject. Not Friendly. In 1955 he told one TV columnist, "This is just a normal change in the chain of maturing."[111]

Murrow and Friendly added to their gamble by occasionally tackling controversial topics. This guaranteed, no matter how fairly they thought they handled an issue, antagonizing some interest groups and newsmakers. *See It Now*'s examination of a proposed constitutional amendment to curb the president's treaty-making power infuriated its sponsor, Senator John W. Bricker of Ohio. Bricker believed the program, like earlier ones, was tilted against his amendment. As the chairman and then ranking minority member of the Senate Commerce Committee, he encouraged a committee investigation into the oligopolistic practices of the networks.[112]

See It Now's most daring programs involved the excesses of domestic anti-Communism. An October 1953 program explored the case of Milo Radulovich, an air force reserve lieutenant who had been declared a security risk. The charges against Radulovich had no basis, Murrow and his reporters concluded. Various community leaders in Radulovich's hometown in Michigan whom *See It Now* reporter Joseph Wershba interviewed, including the local American Legion commander, deemed the reservist a loyal American. Murrow and Friendly had intended to devote only ten minutes to the Radulovich story, but Wershba shot five hours of testimonies, and the story absorbed the full half hour. Alcoa even surrendered its middle commercial to give Murrow's crew more airtime. The air force subsequently relented. One TV critic likened Murrow to Émile Zola.[113]

Such efforts culminated in a March 9, 1954, report on Senator McCarthy. After numerous clips showing the senator at his worst, Murrow ended the program denouncing the Wisconsin Republican. "It remains," the historian Thomas Doherty wrote, "the most dramatic, eloquent, and influential oration ever delivered by a television journalist." Although, like most Cold War liberals, Murrow did not deny the threat of domestic subversion, he decried McCarthy's bullyboy meth-

ods. His inquisitions were intimidating too many Americans. "We will not be driven by fear into an age of unreason," Murrow declared. "If we dig deep in our history and our doctrine, and remember that we are not descended from fearful men—not from men who feared to write, to speak, to associate and to defend causes that were, for the moment, unpopular."[114]

The McCarthy telecast drew great praise. Thousands phoned the network and CBS affiliates, most in support of Murrow. Columbia's Chicago station received just under twenty-five hundred calls, *Variety* reported, with 85 percent endorsing the network newsman. Wershba dubbed it "the greatest spontaneous response in the history of broadcasting."[115] Much of the response could be explained by Murrow and Friendly's decision to forsake anything approaching an objective treatment of the senator. This was very out of character for television news, yet it gave the telecast a special impact. As did Murrow's closing admonition. "Television came of age," Crosby declared. "I can never recall any other time when a network . . . has told its listeners to straighten up and act like free men with the clear implication that they are not doing so now."[116] Colleagues found the forcefulness of Murrow's critique heroic. "One of the great acts of political courage of our time," wired the syndicated columnist Joseph Alsop.[117] "Mr. Murrow," wrote Alistair Cooke for the *Manchester Guardian*, "may yet make bravery fashionable."[118]

The applause was implicitly for *Murrow*, the nation's most prominent broadcast journalist, using *television*, the most popular mass medium, to assail McCarthy. The CBS newsman was largely echoing what others—on the radio and prominent editorial pages—were already saying about the senator. McCarthy's assault on the army, especially on a combat-decorated general who had refused to cooperate with his inquiry, had dismayed even some of his habitual defenders. "McCarthy lost a good deal of newspaper support and probably of popular support with his attack on the army," observed one early critic, ABC commentator Elmer Davis, several days before Murrow's program.[119] In his final remarks, Murrow displayed copies of different newspapers, including the fervently anti-Communist *Chicago Tribune*, that had carried editorials critical of McCarthy.[120] Murrow was one of many Davids shooting stones at Goliath. Wrote one veteran journalist, "The Murrow program in 1954 was so late in the game that its effect was negligible. Murrow said as much."[121] The playwright Arthur Miller, himself the target of the witch hunt, greatly admired the program. Nonetheless, he wrote,

he "lacked the urge to applaud Murrow at the end. He had been so persuasive because he had said what everyone had always known."[122]

Establishing Murrow's direct influence in McCarthy's fall is simply impossible. Several hours before the March 9 program, for example, Republican senator Ralph Flanders of Vermont denounced his Wisconsin colleague in an address thick with sarcasm. As part of a hostile chorus, however, Murrow had an influence. McCarthy's Gallup "favorable-unfavorable" ratings shifted markedly in March. Those having an unfavorable opinion of the senator rose from 29 percent in mid-December to 36 percent in early March. His favorable score fell only slightly, from 50 to 46 percent. By the third week of March, however, the cumulative effect of so much editorial battering, as well as McCarthy's own missteps, which included an attack on President Eisenhower, could be seen: 35 percent had a favorable view of the senator to 49 percent unfavorable.[123]

Did a *television* program attacking McCarthy carry more weight? This was assumed by those who admired Murrow and his legacy. A *Variety* correspondent judged the McCarthy telecast "worth a couple of hundred conventional drama segments in the intensity with which it magnetized the public."[124] And McCarthy did fall from grace, literally disappearing as a political force by year's end. Yet *See It Now* did not have a large audience, and much of it was inclined to Murrow's mainstream liberal politics.[125] (Friendly and Murrow both believed the Army-McCarthy hearings did the most damage to McCarthy's standing.)[126] In addition, much of the nation could not view *See It Now*. A study of network clearances five weeks before the March 9 telecast indicated that thirty-six affiliates carried *See It Now;* twenty-three—including its Dallas and Minneapolis stations—did not. The latter aired a syndicated musical program starring Liberace. Another eighty-two stations, mainly in small markets lacking direct connection to the network, did not air the program. The same document indicated that fifty-eight affiliates telecast the *CBS Evening News*.[127] (The accused air force reserve officer, Milo Radulovich, had been unable to view the earlier *See It Now* exonerating him because CBS's Detroit affiliate carried a syndicated program, *My Favorite Story*, instead of the network news program.)[128]

If nothing else, Murrow's telecast, like the subsequent broadcast of the Army-McCarthy hearings, empowered the senator's critics. They had been baffled, then terrified, by his ascent. The CBS newsman had

confirmed their original judgment. "It was vital to recognize McCarthyism for an exaggerated manifestation of a legitimate worry," *Variety* declared. "Edward R. Murrow has now attacked head-on the one-man myth and pointed up its factual inconsistencies and dubious logic."[129] Because of the *See It Now* program, a Murrow colleague recalled, "opposition to McCarthy had new respectability, the courageous could now speak louder, the meek could speak for the first time, the fearful could at least listen and perhaps learn. The other side had surfaced."[130]

Whatever the effects of the McCarthy telecast, Murrow and Friendly merit enormous credit for doing it. McCarthy's fall was by no means certain on March 9, 1954. Retribution appeared very probable. Even before the program, McCarthy aide Don Surine tried to intimidate Murrow by warning Wershba that the senator's office intended to make much of a trip Murrow had planned to make to the Soviet Union in the 1930s. "I'm not saying Murrow is a Commie," Surine told Wershba, "but he's one of those goddamn anti-anti-Communists, and they're just as dangerous."[131] Such conflict could have been avoided had *See It Now* adhered to its earlier formula and found more to report on Williamsburg and the Dodgers.

Murrow would not turn back. He was convinced that television journalism should not only explore individuals and individual issues, but take positions. The networks, he told David Lilienthal in February 1955, "have power, great power, but no responsibility." The McCarthy program "should have been a decision of the network, of CBS itself, as a deliberate part of its editorial policy, for which it would be held accountable." This power should not be invested in an individual newsman, he told a Los Angeles TV columnist. Like larger daily papers, each network should have six-member boards to determine the network's editorial policy.[132] Instead, producing the McCarthy program was Murrow's call. And when he and Friendly asked Alcoa and CBS to carry newspaper advertisements for the telecast, they declined. The two men paid for a *New York Times* ad out of their own pockets.[133]

If tightfisted about promoting *See It Now*, Paley stood by his veteran correspondent during the 1953–54 season. On the eve of the March 9 telecast, the CBS chairman telephoned Murrow to assure him, "I'll be with you tonight, Ed, and I'll be with you tomorrow." (Paley did not, in fact, watch the March 9 program.)[134] But several months later he defended the right of broadcast news to editorialize. Expressing opinion, when so labeled, was not only appropriate but vital. "Our own timidity

in vital areas of public information is self-perpetuating," he remarked. "It breeds pressures which in turn breed further timidity. Our excursions, by and large, into the responsible exercise of our functions in the field of news and public affairs are often too spasmodic, too tentative, or too sensitive to permit us to realize our own independence and stature. This must be corrected."[135]

But advocacy journalism on television labored to find sponsors. Even before the McCarthy telecast, *Business Week* reported, Alcoa executives were expressing unhappiness about *See It Now*'s penchant for controversy.[136] Much as Alcoa cultivated the goodwill of Murrow's fans, it had to weigh the ill will that a hard-hitting *See It Now* program might create. When Alcoa dropped *See It Now* in mid–1955, new sponsors proved hard to locate. The mere prospect of editorializing could unnerve an advertiser, as Murrow and Friendly found as they completed a *See It Now* examination of the vice presidency. A new sponsor, the Pontiac division of General Motors, withdrew. The car manufacturer worried that *See It Now* would treat Vice President Richard M. Nixon badly. In fact, the program proved almost painfully objective. "The program needed anger," *Variety* concluded, "and there was none. Pontiac had nothing to fear."[137]

While *See It Now* struggled, a second show hosted by Murrow, *Person to Person*, had much greater success. CBS affiliates proved far more eager to clear *Person to Person*. For good reason. During one week in 1956, *Person to Person* had twice the ratings of *See It Now; Person to Person* had a 45 percent share in 1957.[138] Indeed, not until *60 Minutes* in the late 1970s did any news program attract such a large share of the prime-time audience.

Premiering in October 1953, *Person to Person* was a thirty-minute program during which Murrow interviewed two individuals in their homes. Fame normally determined their inclusion. Guests included politicians, actors, scientists, artists, and writers. The setup consisted of Murrow in one set, talking to celebrities in their homes. The program left viewers with the impression that Murrow actually saw his guests. Such were the limitations of television remotes at the time, however, that Murrow could only speak to and not actually see his subjects. "The picture of Ed and his guest together was an electronic composite that existed only on home sets," a show producer recalled. The comedian Fred Allen twice refused to be a guest. "I've never been in his house, so why should I have him in mine?" he cracked. "I don't care if the critics

pan me, but on that show they could pan my furniture."[139] The questions and answers were rehearsed. Still, there were mix-ups. Guest Sid Caesar became so nervous that he forgot his wife's name.[140]

Person to Person puzzled many of Murrow's admirers. How could a man who defined journalism so seriously do such a show? Chancing upon him in a restaurant, Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine stopped to ask, "Ed, why do you do *that* program?"[141] "*Person to Person* was not journalism; it was an animated fan magazine," one biographer concluded.[142] Several prominent critics found the program an empty exercise. Gilbert Seldes acknowledged that many of Murrow's guests came from the arts, politics, and religion, but the program somehow managed to shrink them all. "Every single one of them came off diminished in stature, every one of them not only talked of trivial things, but talked trivially." The format of the program "reduce[d] nine-tenths of these people to showing us their houses and their trophies." Murrow was part of the problem. He did not probe. His "questions do not lead to their hearts or their minds or their selves. They lead to exhibiting goods and gadgets."[143]

Murrow had mixed feelings about the program. He continuously told coworkers that he did *Person to Person* largely as a favor to two of his radio producers who had come up with the concept and needed the money; Murrow himself made more on his investment in the show than anything else he ever did in broadcasting. He did enjoy rubbing shoulders (if not literally) with *some* celebrities. At times, though, he appeared indifferent, even bored. Some guests did not engage him, while others, most remarkably, the beautiful film actress Marilyn Monroe, left him ill at ease. (Asked why, he confessed that "I know next to nothing about show business.") In a hopeless effort to placate his critics, and perhaps his own conscience, Murrow took pains to include serious figures whom subsequent celebrity journalists, notably Barbara Walters, avoided, and to ask them serious questions. He even insisted at first on occasional sessions with unknown Americans, though the producers eventually persuaded him to drop such egalitarian casting. It failed to charm viewers. "If I want to see how the average guy lives," wrote one, "I can visit my relatives."[144]

Murrow had mistakenly thought that the popularity of *Person to Person* would keep his serious but far less watched journalistic endeavor, *See It Now*, on the air,[145] which because of the program's high production expenses lost money for Columbia. No such trade-off could last,

however. *See It Now*'s ratings failed to improve. And in mid–1955, Paley himself ordered the program off the weekly schedule. Murrow and Friendly produced an hour-long version of *See It Now* that appeared once a month for the next three years; "See It Now and Then" headlined one newspaper. In 1958, Columbia canceled the program.[146]

Murrow and Friendly bore some of the blame for *See It Now*'s fate. Murrow prided himself on ignoring the ratings for the program (he was far more interested in those for *Person to Person*). *See It Now*'s small audience became a badge of honor—a self-fulfilling prophecy. They dared to be preachy, if not dull. One admirer, the documentary filmmaker Robert Drew, thought Murrow and Friendly could have assembled a more compelling program. "Murrow has established a bridgehead for a new form of journalism," Drew wrote, "but he has failed to win what is considered in TV to be a mass audience." Part of the difficulty, Drew determined, was the show itself. "People who know Murrow's problem feel that he has the idea-power to develop his form, increase his audience, and break out of his bridgehead." But *See It Now* possessed too many weaknesses. "The reality in Murrow's reporting is often stilted. His reporters intrude themselves into stories, deliver speeches and shatter carefully-built effects. The great parts of his photography are some times overbalanced by stretches of dull film."[147]

At first, CBS could live with *See It Now*'s modest ratings. But the network's development of an inventory of popular entertainment programming placed a premium on the entire schedule. Columbia lost money airing *See It Now* on Tuesday evenings; it could make a profit carrying a promising situation comedy, *My Favorite Wife*, during *See It Now*'s time slot. And if, as was the case, that program failed to find an audience, the network could try again, as it did in the fall of 1956 with the quiz show *Do You Trust Your Wife?*

In that regard, *See It Now* fell victim to Columbia's intensely competitive programming strategy. CBS was doing very well financially. The network could easily have kept Murrow in prime time, if only to please those television critics and opinion leaders who revered the newsman. Yet Columbia had not overtaken NBC in the ratings by conceding blocks of airtime to TV columnists. It was precisely that approach that had cost NBC, under Weaver, its initial popularity.

See It Now might nevertheless have survived except for several other factors. The first beset all the networks. After years of double-digit growth, network advertising sales leveled off. Ad billings by the net-

works, which had risen 28.1 percent in 1955 and 19.0 percent a year later, increased by a more modest 7.7 percent in 1957.[148] None of the networks lost money. Yet the gold rush appeared to be over. Executives could no longer count on a steady spurt in ad sales to compensate for too many scheduling misjudgments or public service donations. *See It Now* was one of four television news programs—the other three were sustaining Sunday ghetto offerings few affiliates carried—CBS elected to cancel in 1958 in what Eric Sevareid termed "this economy wave."[149] At the same time, ABC had become a greater competitor without, after 1954, taking its news programming very seriously. The pressure on Columbia and NBC to emphasize entertainment over information only increased.[150] "The balance between profit and loss in the case of the networks is so delicate that the failure to sell a single half hour," Stanton told the FCC in March 1958, "can cost a network almost $3 million."[151]

Then, too, *See It Now* posed special challenges for CBS. The program's production costs were too high and its producers too high-handed. Murrow insisted that Columbia affiliates carry both *See It Now* and *Person to Person* at the scheduled hours. Preferring to air the programs at other times in favor of syndicated material, some affiliates refused to clear them altogether. One *Person to Person* sponsor, CBS TV president J. L. Van Volkenburg wrote, "is losing a tremendous amount of advertising circulation." Only one other CBS prime-time program, Westinghouse's *Best of Broadway*, had this policy.[152] Murrow's group could be difficult in other ways. *See It Now* had its own production unit, separate from the television news division. Such autonomy fostered resentment. Sig Mickelson, vice president for news, had no real authority over Murrow's fiefdom. Murrow cavalierly ignored Mickelson's questions about cost overruns (at a time when Mickelson himself had to run a tight ship). Pericles was playing with fire. Although committed to maintaining a television news division, CBS expected its news producers to contain expenses. This was no different from Columbia's investment in entertainment programming. CBS programs tended to be efficiently mounted. Money was thrown at performers and producers *after* their series had become hits. Paley paid Murrow $1 million for the rights to *Person to Person* in 1956, once it had established itself as a viewer favorite. Repeatedly, Murrow and Friendly spent too freely on a show that was losing money. "The program consistently ran over budget," Sig Mickelson recalled, "not marginally but grossly."[153]

Such internal politics were not apparent to *See It Now*'s fans. These included the nation's TV critics and a few political leaders, notably Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts (a guest during *Person to Person*'s first season). All vocally protested *See It Now*'s departure. "The disappearance from the air of 'See It Now' has been treated as a public calamity," an angry Gilbert Seldes wrote.[154] In one of the wiser commentaries, the syndicated columnist Marquis Childs acknowledged the program's high costs, but stressed its great superiority to virtually any other television news program.[155] Crosby dubbed it "by every criterion television's most brilliant, most decorated, most imaginative, most courageous and most important program."[156]

Several months later, Murrow himself spoke out. In a widely covered address, he accused all of the networks of abdicating their responsibilities to viewers. Far too much of the schedule went to entertainment programming. He decried "the decadence, escapism, and insulation from the realities of the world in which we live." But Murrow did more than admonish the networks to increase their news schedules, he urged them to offer programs that dared to take positions on issues of vital importance. "There is a great and perhaps decisive battle to be fought against ignorance, intolerance and indifference," he declared. "The weapon of television could be useful."[157] The speech caused a sensation. *TV Guide*, the nation's most popular weekly directory of programs, reprinted the address. It constituted "an unprecedented amount of space for the magazine," wrote two *TV Guide* historians. The magazine subsequently praised Murrow's speech.[158] Critic Marya Mannes called it "the most important statement ever made about television and the American people."[159]

Murrow, in fact, was caught in a time warp. It was still 1940. The nation and the world were still in peril. Paley had betrayed him. Paley had changed, or so Murrow thought. But the chairman's transformation had not, as Murrow and others believed, come about in the mid–1950s. It had occurred a decade earlier, when the war ended. Paley would no longer be content operating a network known more for its prestige in news and cultural programming than its entertainment series. He intended to overtake NBC. Murrow ignored the implications of this approach for his career at the network. The telltale signs—the cancellation of some radio news programs after the war—had not affected him directly. Instead, Paley and Columbia had indulged him, even agreeing to air his TV programs. Paley momentarily appeared to embrace Murrow's

call for more advocacy journalism. But CBS's decision not to air any of the Army-McCarthy hearings because of the revenues that would have been lost by canceling popular daytime programming was quite telling. CBS was the only network not to telecast at least some of the Senate proceedings. In time, Paley's magnanimity toward Murrow ended. In retrospect, the remarkable aspect to *See It Now* was not that CBS had the audacity, given its influential viewership, to cancel the series, but that the network, given its spendthrift ways, aired it in the first place. At a reunion of CBS newsmen in 1985, Sevareid confessed, "We were a privileged lot, gentlemen."[160]

CBS was not, however, about to close its news division. As the storm over *See It Now*'s cancellation evidenced, opinion leaders expected the network to continue to produce news programming. Columbia's management understood that expectation. CBS executives plotted to reinvent the economic base of its news division, specifically, to make better use of its still impressive on- and off-camera talent, and not just Murrow. (One of the problems with *See It Now* was that it was a separate unit of the news division.) The evening news was just fifteen minutes, and Sunday afternoon programs were not economically viable. Sig Mickelson proposed a solution: a prime-time, monthly, hour-long documentary exploring a single important topic. Although it would resemble *See It Now*, different CBS correspondents—not just Murrow—would host. It would be produced by the news division, not by a special wing with its own talent and (often ignored) budget. The economic model would work if a patron could be found. Stanton secured one in the camera equipment manufacturer Bell and Howell. In May 1959, Stanton announced the creation of *CBS Reports.* Friendly, Murrow's former partner, would produce the series. Murrow would host only some of the specials.[161]

Further incentive for news programming came that fall, when congressional hearings revealed that the once-popular quiz shows had been fixed. Both CBS and NBC, which carried the discredited programs, promised to be more socially responsible. Friendly found himself suddenly taken more seriously. "Even the elevator operators here at CBS look at us differently," he noted. "It's as if we've been put on a pedestal."[162] ABC, which regarded news programming much as a child welcomed his mother's overcooked asparagus, launched a documentary series. But Murrow's second demand—that news programs take positions—went largely unheeded. Sponsors of hard-hitting video journal-

ism proved hard to find. With some exceptions overseen by Friendly, producers of documentaries in the 1960s avoided controversial topics or self-consciously adhered to moderation; they were bland exercises. "The exciting bite of a *See It Now* has been dulled," Jack Gould observed. "Documentaries now are wholesome; they don't jar the convictions."[163]

"Informed without Being Ponderous"

NBC sought to seize upon Murrow's estrangement from CBS. On several occasions, General Sarnoff himself approached Murrow about defecting to his network. The financial terms were reportedly great, as would have been the irony if the general had succeeded in robbing Columbia of its most prominent news personality some ten years after Paley's raids. Murrow, however, would not leave the network; loyalty stemmed a growing bitterness.[164]

Sarnoff's wooing of Murrow indicated the degree to which NBC had permitted Columbia to be the leader in broadcast news. It was an edge Columbia had taken during the war and, despite some cutbacks afterward, sustained. Joseph Pulitzer II, publisher of the *St. Louis Post–Dispatch* and owner of St. Louis's KSD-TV, was sufficiently upset to weigh switching his station's affiliation from NBC to CBS in early 1953. "I explained your concern," his son wrote, "that CBS is now conspicuously outranking NBC in news and public service programs on television."[165] A year later, Eric Sevareid's agent bragged, "Bill Paley and Frank Stanton have every right to be proud of CBS's unquestioned leadership in the field of news."[166]

NBC initially allowed CBS to retain its advantages by default. It spent less than Columbia on news. *Camel News Caravan*, NBC's own research indicated in September 1953, had roughly three-fourths the budget of *CBS Evening News*.[167] NBC did invest in ambitious Project XX documentary projects, beginning with *Victory at Sea* in 1952. But they focused on recent history, and avoided current controversies that *See It Now* tackled. Moreover, the Project XX documentaries' reliance on preexisting footage and images reduced their costs. For *Victory at Sea*, the navy provided the network with the use of its photographic center.[168] A thirty-minute program, *Background*, intended to be a response to *See It Now*, lasted only four weeks in evening prime time in 1954; relegating *Background* to the Sunday ghetto, the network dropped the program the following year. The syndicated columnist Marquis Childs referred to *Background* as "interesting but unhappily short-lived."[169]

Weaver bore much of the responsibility for NBC's journalistic reticence. Entertainment programming preoccupied the TV programming chief. He rarely evidenced his rivals' faith in the public relations value of news programming. Then, too, Weaver had no background in journalism and refused to draw a thick line separating information from entertainment. In Weaver's world, the two—like high culture and popular culture—could be fused. He imagined television entertainers as news people. He encouraged Milton Berle, of all people, to include Vice President Barkley on his variety show. The comedian Bob Hope participated in NBC's coverage of the 1952 national party conventions.[170] Weaver's great innovation in news programming, *The Today Show*, was hosted by a radio and TV entertainer, Dave Garroway, not an NBC News correspondent. Garroway, in turn, anchored NBC News's coverage of the 1954 elections.[171] It was odd casting. Garroway was the network's Arthur Godfrey, not Ed Murrow. Weaver did encourage the creation of a news program, *Wide Wide World* (the title was taken from the Dartmouth anthem), in 1955, with live remotes from across the country, Canada, and Mexico. "North America becomes the television stage," an NBC publicist declared. Yet Weaver hired a producer, Barry Wood, with a show business background. Wood was not especially bright, NBC producer Reuven Frank recalled, once asking if the mime Marcel Marceau performed in English or French. Garroway hosted the program.[172]

Garroway's prominence was no accident. Told to find new network news anchors, Weaver aide Richard A. R. Pinkham approached the writer John Hersey and UN ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge. Although both had backgrounds in print journalism, neither had worked in radio or TV news; Hersey did not even own a TV set.[173] Weaver himself had little regard for broadcast news reporters. He was, in fact, a "news snob" who adhered to a hierarchy of journalism. NBC's news analysis should come from well-known newspaper columnists and not someone in-house. "Frankly, I would rather hear what Walter Lippmann has to say than most television commentators," he remarked. "If they'll pardon me, I think that we should use television to bring in the opinions of men who have done enough and said enough to have a stature and respect by most thinking people."[174] Unless, of course, the network could bring such men in-house. Several times, NBC News producer Reuven Frank recalled, Weaver attempted to hire reporters from the *New York Times*. "Portly men in vests with mushy speech patterns who could not

say 'Howdy' in fewer than a thousand words." Weaver's "widely trumpeted low opinion of what we did," Frank recalled, "destroyed morale in the news department."[175]

Slowly, NBC News began to assert itself. After a long talent search, the network thought it had found its "Murrow," a Los Angeles–based newscaster, Chet Huntley. He joined NBC in 1955. Although Huntley possessed the serious demeanor of the CBS commentator—*TV Guide* called him a "worrier"—he lacked Murrow's reporting experience and knowledge of domestic politics. Like Murrow, Huntley had stood up to the excesses of anti-Communism; he won a lawsuit against a woman who had dubbed him a Communist and tried to blacklist him. Huntley assumed his role as NBC's answer to Murrow too literally at first; producers had to dissuade him from imitating Murrow's on-air manner too closely. Beginning on Easter 1956, Huntley hosted a Sunday afternoon news program, *Outlook*, which offered longer reports than could be presented on the fifteen-minute newscasts. Without generating the critical praise of *See It Now*, *Outlook* represented a start.[176]

Huntley participated in NBC's great leap forward later that year. After much bickering, the decision makers at the news division designated Huntley and a young NBC reporter, David Brinkley, as coanchors, of the network's coverage of the party conventions. It was, producer Reuven Frank recalled, "an accident of casting." Brinkley's thirteen years in Washington compensated for Huntley's lack of familiarity with domestic politics. The pairing worked for another reason. Huntley tended to be dour. An unimpressed critic dismissed him as "not much of a smiler. The grim type. Everything explained or analyzed with small indications that doom is just around the corner." Yet this quality was more than offset by Brinkley's dry wit. And both men possessed the most prized quality for such assignments, the ability to ad-lib. Most critics and many viewers were deeply impressed. They were, Margaret McManus of the *Newark Evening News* wrote, "an unusual pair, informed without being ponderous, serious with a diverting eye for the ludicrous, articulate but not talky."[177]

In late October, the two men became the anchors of NBC's early evening newscast. They replaced John Cameron Swayze, the host of *The Camel News Caravan* for seven and a half years. He had enjoyed some initial popularity: 35.9 percent of New York City area viewers in 1951 judged him their favorite newscaster, compared with 8.1 percent for Edwards of CBS. Swayze's fans included President Eisenhower

(who protested his termination). Swayze's days were numbered when *Camel News Caravan* dropped behind *CBS Evening News* in 1955 in the ratings—and despite reaching more television homes. Weaver had long wanted Swayze removed. Although he had respectable journalistic credentials, his on-air delivery was too breezy for news aficionados to take seriously. "Let's go hopscotching the world for headlines," he announced as he prepared to read one-line summaries of news. Huntley and Brinkley appeared to be intelligent substitutes—and potentially essential to the newscast's success. For various technical reasons, twenty or thirty years ago the anchor was on the air far more than correspondents.[178]

Huntley and Brinkley's convention success proved hard to repeat. *The Huntley Brinkley Report* at first had lower ratings than Swayze's program, and many NBC affiliates refused to carry the newscast. There were a host of technical glitches. The first telecast, Frank recalled, "sticks in my mind as the worst evening news program in the history of American network television." Sponsors abandoned the newscast for thirteen weeks in the summer of 1957, despite a heavy discount by the network.[179]

Their initial rating woes indicated news' precarious place on television. Since 1949, NBC had scheduled its weekday newscast at 7:45; it was preceded by a fifteen-minute network entertainment program (during the 1956–57 season, *The Nat King Cole Show*); CBS aired Doug Edwards's newscast at 7:30. In the fall of 1954, ABC, as would become its custom, engaged in its "counterprogramming" strategy. On three different nights, it slated programming that appealed to children, including *Disneyland*, *Rin Tin Tin*, and *The Lone Ranger* during the 7 to 8 or 7:30 to 8 periods. And in numerous American living rooms, younger viewers won the power struggle with parents who might have preferred to watch the news. *Camel News Caravan* lost between 30 and 40 percent of its audience during the 1954–55 season. The following season, CBS moved Edwards back to 7:15 and adopted ABC's strategy by scheduling children's programs several nights at 7:30. Swayze could not compete with *Robin Hood* or *Sgt. Preston.* Nor, as it turned out, could Huntley and Brinkley. Indeed, their low numbers were hurting the potential audience flow for NBC's 8:00 p.m. entertainment shows. "The net result," wrote one NBC vice president, "was a loss of audience for both NBC News and regular entertainment vehicles."[180] NBC reluctantly pushed *The Huntley Brinkley Report* back to 6:45 and slated entertainment programs in its old slot. The network had to act, Robert Sarnoff wrote a station manager. The 7:30 to 8:00 period "feeds the rest of the evening

schedule. And it is one where we have been letting the competition run away with the audience by default."[181] By substituting entertainment programs for newscasts, NBC's average audience from 7:30 to 8:00 p.m. weekdays rose 54 percent.[182]

Although the decision benefited the network's overall competitive position, it severely undermined *The Huntley Brinkley Report.* Because so many potential viewers were returning from work, preparing or eating dinner, the earlier airtime lowered the newscast's total audience. "A bad time," a Los Angeles woman wrote Huntley. "I was able to enjoy it much better when it was til last year, later in the evening!" Many affiliates, including ones in Boston, Cleveland, and Detroit, refused to surrender the time because they could earn more carrying their own or syndicated programming. During the 1957–58 season, 63 stations carried *The Huntley Brinkley Report*, compared with 153 clearing Doug Edwards's program. Not for another four years did this gap close.[183]

Huntley and Brinkley's real advantage came during network coverage of the conventions, election nights, and inaugurations, when they captured up to half or more of all viewers watching television. NBC's shrewd use of the convention and other event coverage to promote its news anchors eventually paid off. As more viewers turned to NBC during such telecasts, they also chose to watch the network's nightly newscast. In early 1960, *The Huntley Brinkley Report* slightly overtook Edwards in the ratings.[184] During the 1960 conventions, NBC had a 51 percent share of the television audience, to 36 percent for CBS and 13 percent for ABC.[185] On election night 1960, NBC held its huge lead over Columbia and ABC. "The rating outcome," Marie Torre of the *New York Herald Tribune* concluded, "ensures NBC's recently-acquired position as the network leader in electronic journalism."[186]

Gradually, *The Huntley Brinkley Report* changed the tone of television newscasting. The dominant form had been identified with Murrow and the radio reportage of the Second World War. Although Murrow had a sense of humor, his on-air demeanor was normally severe. Even an admiring biographer referred to Murrow as "a dark avenger, an occasional scourge, a frequent public scold, a brooding conscience whom people respected but could only take in limited doses."[187] Journalism remained serious, especially at CBS. *Newsweek* in 1961 spoke of CBS reporting occasionally "saddled with an air of doom and gloom, a hang-over from the Ed Murrow era." Huntley and Brinkley did not transform TV news into high comedy, but they tried to make viewing it less of an ordeal.

Newsweek spoke of "their formula of authority without pomposity, a basic seriousness leavened with a masterfully measured soupçon of wit."[188] "They are relaxed, friendly and not at all solemn about their jobs, which is refreshing," *Variety* observed.[189] Wrote a Brooklyn man, "Yours is the best, the most cogent, the most clever, the most iconoclastic, the mostly delightfully irritating program of news analysis to be had."[190]

Brinkley was the far more important cast member. Although close to many Washington decision makers, he honored his primary obligation to make the news understood by viewers many miles from the federal city and unfamiliar with the thick detail of policy and jargon of legislators and bureaucrats. "He took care to avoid sounding like a Washington insider," the *New York Times* observed, "even when he was one."[191] He could summarize a political story clearly and concisely—and without being condescending. (Brinkley as an adolescent much admired E. B. White, the champion of plain writing.) Still, Brinkley was best recognized for his frequent utilization of humor or irony. (Viewers often identified him as "the funny one.") "During the last decade," wrote one industry observer in 1965, "Huntley and Brinkley swept away the stuffy, old-fashioned concept of ponderous reporting with their concisely written and wry comments."[192]

Opinion leaders, whether in Washington or smaller cities and towns across the country, began to view *The Huntley Brinkley Report.* A 1961 survey indicated that just under 60 percent of members of the House and Senate usually watched NBC, compared with 27.1 percent for CBS. Members of Congress were twice as likely to rank either Huntley or Brinkley as their favorite newscaster to any CBS reporter.[193] Among journalists, Brinkley gave NBC News a measure of the prestige Murrow had created for CBS. Correspondents for the more prestigious daily papers considered most broadcast news correspondents to be lightweights. But Brinkley, as a writer and observer, commanded their respect. No less a cardinal of the church than Walter Lippmann of the *New York Herald Tribune* spoke of Brinkley as "one who knows what's going on."[194]

Nonetheless, the popularity of news programs in the 1950s remained relative. That is, even as *The Huntley Brinkley Report* experienced higher ratings, its audience remained small when compared with the network's entertainment programming later in the evening. (Those surveyed tended to overstate, like their daily consumption of vegetables, their viewing of TV news programming.) Partly because the network newscast was aired so early in the evening, only a small percentage of

Americans actually watched *The Huntley Brinkley Report* (or its competitors) regularly, that is, more than two or three times a week. Relatively few gave the newscasts the attention they awarded entertainment programming. At the decade's end, Americans were still far more likely to get their news from a daily newspaper than from television.[195]

But all in all, the success of Huntley and Brinkley did signal a shift in the rank order of network news. Until the late 1950s, anchoring a national newscast held little prestige. Murrow had been among those spurning the assignment. Prestige did not go to those reading headlines on fifteen-minute newscasts but to the hosts of documentary series like *See It Now*. NBC began changing that attitude by heavily promoting its evening news program, its anchors, and its correspondents. Falling behind Columbia in the prime-time ratings, NBC was in no position to carry too much informational programming in the evening. The evening newscasts offered an alternative. Their ratings might not match those for *Wagon Train*, but they were far less expensive to produce. When ordered to cut costs sharply in early 1957, Reuven Frank scrapped the costly New York set in favor of a "closet." CBS did not have such fiscal flexibility with the large budget of *See It Now*.[196] NBC did not need to charge advertisers as much to sponsor *The Huntley Brinkley Report* to earn money, in time, a great deal of money.[197]

More than public relations accounted for the rise of NBC News. In 1957, the former president of ABC, Robert E. Kintner, joined the network, in effect replacing Weaver. Unlike Weaver, Kintner was a former journalist with a strong commitment to broadcast news. He had championed ABC's telecasting of the Kefauver and McCarthy hearings. Like his counterparts at CBS, Kintner separated his network's news and entertainment functions. "If he had his way," wrote one journalist of Kintner, "TV will remain a dual medium of information and entertainment."[198] While busily dismantling Weaver's enlightenment machinery, Kintner promoted news programming. He had the full support of NBC chairman Robert Sarnoff. Although William McAndrew was the formal head of NBC News, Kintner closely oversaw his operations. Negotiating a deal with NBC News, William Shirer had an encouraging meeting with McAndrew. But Shirer realized that "Bob Kintner makes all the decisions over there."[199] Kintner did grant McAndrew the power to interrupt the regular network schedule with a breaking story whenever he believed necessary. Such authority during the Weaver years had necessitated the approval of so many network officials that a breaking story

was often no longer news when finally announced on NBC television. "No longer," Frank remembered, "would it take four phone calls and two meetings to ask leave to interrupt a soap opera to give America the news that the sky had fallen." (At the same time, Kintner preferred that preempted programs be less popular ones.)[200] Kintner soon extended the network's commitment to what he dubbed "CBS plus thirty." NBC would dedicate as much time to special coverage as Columbia, plus thirty minutes. Morale at NBC News shot up.[201]

NBC's triumph was not all Kintner's doing. His departure from ABC ended for nearly twenty years any serious effort by that network to be competitive in news programming. Columbia still had a formidable team of correspondents, including a despondent Murrow. Yet the network's commitment to news programming, compared with NBC's under Kintner, was fitful. Just as NBC had squandered its early lead in entertainment ratings in the first half of the 1950s, Columbia failed to capitalize on its immense advantages. "The CBS News cutback for economy reasons has gone too deep," Eric Sevareid wrote, "and NBC is going to make us pay through the nose for this."[202]

Concomitantly, Kintner determined to make TV news pay or at least to limit the losses. He personally found sponsors for *The Huntley Brinkley Report* as well as news specials. He freely admitted that without the help of Gulf Oil, NBC would have been hard-pressed to produce much special coverage.[203] Then, too, investing in news programming placated those critics, writing for major newspapers or overseeing broadcasting in Washington, dismayed by trends in entertainment programming, ones that Kintner hurried along.[204] And prime-time news specials and documentaries *were* sacrifices, he told FCC investigators in October 1958. No matter how well promoted, news shows could not compete for viewer favor against sitcoms or Westerns.[205]

On assignment early in 1960, Brinkley uncomfortably confronted his program's growing prominence. He occasionally did some reporting, including a visit to West Virginia, whose presidential primary offered a severe test of the prospects of Senator John F. Kennedy. His primary opponent was Hubert Humphrey, Kennedy's immensely likable colleague from Minnesota. Humphrey made up in cheerfulness what he lacked in physical appearance. He had been a U.S. senator and a force in national Democratic politics for nearly a dozen years. Yet the voters of West Virginia, Brinkley found to his dismay, were most anxious to make *his* acquaintance. Some approaching him thought he was Huntley.[206]

10 Shooting the Wounded

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Is it a crime to be third?
Frieda B. Hennock, 1953

• • • •

There is also no doubt that in a few years there will be little if any difference between the networks.
Anne W. Langman, 1956

• • • •

ABC introduced their horse-ass operas, their Disneyland public relations shows; and they lowered television. . . . They didn't care about anything but the ratings.
Fred Coe, n.d.

Milton Berle could not be stopped. To the very end of his long life, he was performing for friends and admirers. After NBC canceled his variety hour in 1956, Berle tried repeatedly to find some of the limelight that he had so enjoyed in the earliest years of TV. "People ask me if I'd like to be No. 1 again," Berle remarked. "I'd just like to be a comfortable 16th and sell the sponsor's products." In 1960, he even emceed a bowling program. Six years later, despite a personal services contract with NBC, he hosted a variety show for ABC. It was a short-lived endeavor. The TV watcher of 1966 rejected Mr. Television. Berle himself chose to fault ABC. It was, after all, "the third network," the least watched by viewers and least desired by advertisers. "The way to end the Vietnam war is to put it on ABC," he cracked. "It'll be over in thirteen weeks."[1]

It would be tempting to dismiss ABC from any extended discussion

of early television. After all, NBC and CBS dominated the new industry. The Big Two absorbed most of the audiences and the great bulk of national television advertising. ABC spent most of television's first ten years struggling to survive. The network faced gargantuan obstacles, so great that it did not become fully competitive until the mid–1970s. Yet by avoiding extinction, ABC had a profound effect on American television. It had enough success to settle industry debates about the shape and aspirations of the newest medium. At the same time, ABC cast new rules for television.

ABC was a regulatory, not a market, phenomenon. In the 1930s, NBC operated two radio networks, the Red and the Blue, with affiliates in many of the same cities. In a rare display of regulatory zeal, the Federal Communications Commission in 1941 ruled that no network could have more than one affiliate in the same community. NBC had to sell the Blue chain. In effect, the FCC created a third radio network. The commission adhered to one of the defining liberal goals of mass media regulation. Concentration was bad. Democracy would benefit from—and government should foster—a multiplicity of voices. "Competition, given a fair test," the FCC concluded, "will best protect the public interest."[2]

What was fine in principle was problematic in practice. The Blue Network had been NBC's more socially responsible chain. It was more likely to carry "sustaining" public service programming, including political addresses and congressional hearings. Such industry "statesmanship" was not likely to characterize its successor. Paley biographer Sally Bedell Smith considered the Blue Network decision "a classic case of good intentions leading to bad policy."[3]

When the Supreme Court upheld the Chain Broadcasting Rules in 1943, NBC sold the Blue Network to the Life Saver candy manufacturer Edward J. Noble. Renamed ABC, the third network labored to compete with its established competitors. There were some successes. The immensely popular singer Bing Crosby joined ABC after its management agreed to let him record his programs. Groucho Marx resurrected his career with an ABC quiz program, *You Bet Your Life*, also transcribed. But neither Bing nor Groucho could do much to raise ABC's overall ratings, which remained mired in third place. The Blue Network had not only been the more responsible NBC sibling, it also had been the least popular. Listeners were used to choosing between NBC Red and CBS. At the same time, although ABC actually had more

affiliates than Columbia or NBC in the late 1940s, the new entrant had fewer powerful, clear-channel stations. ABC could not overcome such weaknesses. As ABC president Robert E. Kintner acknowledged in September 1950, "Our coverage is not equal to NBC and CBS, nor is our name talent."[4]

Noble could have spent his money more wisely. Between 1943 and 1953, Noble's ABC shares increased in gross value 80 percent. Yet he drew no salary. As his longtime aide E. E. Anderson noted, had Noble invested his $6 million in the thirty stocks constituting the Dow Jones industrial average in early 1943, his investment's gross value would have risen 150 percent. Wrote Anderson, "It would have been difficult for anyone to have made a poorer investment."[5]

Without much enthusiasm, Noble committed his network to a far more expensive proposition by launching a television network in April 1948. ABC moved early enough to secure the maximum number of five licenses it could own and operate. This immediately gave the network an advantage over CBS and Du Mont, neither of which, for different reasons, had obtained five VHF licenses. This proved no small advantage. The owned and operated stations quickly allowed ABC to recover some of the money lost building a television network.

In the late 1940s, however, even ABC's own stations were awash in red ink, and Noble labored to preserve his newest enterprise. Loans kept the ship afloat, but a stock offering fell short of expectations. The company lacked the capital necessary to make its television network competitive. A plan, modeled after Paley's raids, to sign popular talent to network contracts had to be abandoned; ABC could only claim the radio entertainers Ozzie and Harriet Nelson. Ambitious programming investments in the 1949 and 1950 season had to be cut back. A notorious tightwad (an *admirer* called him "a cheap S.O.B."), Noble found retrenchment an easy choice.[6]

ABC's belt-tightening could not have come at a worse moment. "This is a formative period of television," Kintner explained. "Impressions are made on the public, on affiliates, on sponsors."[7] NBC and Columbia were producing appealing programs. They not only won over viewers—and potential viewers—but also made themselves attractive to innumerable station managers. TV stations wanted to affiliate with a network, ideally one that commanded the largest audience share. In January 1951, ABC had fourteen affiliates compared to CBS's thirty and NBC's sixty-three.[8] Compounding ABC's woes, many of the first

TV license holders already operated radio stations that had affiliation agreements with either NBC or CBS. The Big Two could trade on their goodwill with stations, some of which had been affiliates for two decades. Such old ties assumed added weight because of the FCC's freeze on license allocations between 1948 and 1952. This slowed the start-up of new stations that might have affiliated with ABC (or Du Mont). In many markets, only one or two channels operated during this period and shared their affiliation with more than one network. Not surprisingly, station managers tended to prefer the most popular programming, usually offered by NBC or CBS. With their programs more likely to reach viewers, the Big Two were rewarded by advertisers. In 1951, ABC had a 14.5 percent share of four-network billings compared to 33.2 percent for Columbia and 46.2 percent for NBC. The following year, ABC's share fell to 10.2 percent.[9]

Taking Risks

To break this impasse, ABC needed more capital for programming. Only then, it was assumed, would stations and viewers consider the third network. Noble and the ABC board concluded that this meant merging with another, larger company with the resources ABC lacked. The potential partners were few. Investors in the late 1940s and 1950s much preferred established manufacturing concerns like General Motors and U.S. Steel. Show business involved too many risks. "The number of companies that are willing to enter this field is very limited," ABC's president told the FCC. Car or tire sales could be forecast. How many captains of finance could predict with any certainty the success of Milton Berle? ABC's suitors were predictable. "It takes companies not only with sufficient working capital and earning powers," Kintner added, "but companies whose management are familiar enough with the communications and entertainment business to be willing to take the risks."[10]

ABC held discussions with two motion picture studios. One of them, 20th Century Fox, almost purchased the network in late 1948. From a strategic standpoint, such a marriage made sense. Fox could have provided ABC with an impressive inventory of feature films. Moreover, Fox could have produced some network programs, assuming that it could have overcome the problems the larger studios faced trying to create thirty- and sixty-minute series in the mid–1950s. But the Fox-ABC union might well have failed. Federal regulators, mindful of the

studios' antitrust violations involving film exhibition, would have been at best uneasy about the marriage. (Any transfer of licenses required the approval of the FCC and was subject to review by the Department of Justice.) Even if Washington permitted the combination, Fox would very probably not have invested the money necessary to make ABC competitive. In the end, the deal collapsed when Noble proved unwilling, under the terms of Fox's offer, to give up his entire stake in ABC. Reported the *New York Times*, "Mr. Noble now finds that he likes working in radio and TV."[11]

In 1951 came another proposal, from CBS. For all its liabilities, ABC did own five stations; Columbia only had two. O&Os were the network's major revenue source. Merging with ABC would have given CBS the same number of owned and operated stations as NBC; the two additional stations could be sold to help cover some of the acquisition costs. Although tempted, the ABC board turned down Columbia's offer. The merger, by reversing an objective of chain broadcasting rules, would have upset most if not all the commissioners and might well have been disallowed. (Given the commission's policy inconsistencies, this outcome should not have been assumed.) Noble for his part realized all CBS really wanted was his stations. The rest of ABC would have been sold off.[12]

A more promising partner was United Paramount Theatres. UPT had formerly been the exhibition division of Paramount Pictures. The Justice Department had compelled Paramount, along with four other film studios, to spin off their theater chains. Moreover, UPT, under the terms of the Justice Department consent decree, had to sell some of its theaters. This partial liquidation as well as depreciation generated cash for the new company that, under the terms of the decree, could not be invested in film exhibition—or production. UPT was looking for an investment opportunity in the entertainment field. The possibility of acquiring ABC intrigued UPT's new president, Leonard Goldenson.[13]

A graduate of Harvard and Harvard Law School, Goldenson was both literally and figuratively far removed from the day-to-day fixations of the movie colony. "My arena was exhibition," he recalled, "and my base was New York." His time had been taken up negotiating with theater managers around the country, making sure the concessions were appealing and the receipts in order. Perhaps because he had spent his two decades at Paramount in distribution—and not production—Goldenson did not share the film industry's condescension toward television.

If Goldenson "had been president of the Pennsylvania Railroad," a colleague later remarked, "he would have long ago merged the Pennsy with an airline."[14] As early as 1937, he had encouraged Paramount to secure a TV license in Chicago. After first considering acquiring individual station licenses, he learned that Noble sought a partner.[15]

Goldenson regarded television as a means of expanding UPT's established business. TV would not kill the moviegoing habit, Goldenson told the FCC in 1952. "The screen in the house is still small," he observed. Left unsaid was his belief that television could promote film attendance. Soon after the merger won approval, ABC struck a deal with the Motion Picture Association of America. A thirty-minute weekly series, *Hollywood Parade*, would preview the latest releases of ten different studios. It would have resembled series offered by entertainment cable channels at the end of the century. The arrangement fell apart when some stars refused to participate.[16]

Goldenson's courtship of Noble proved rocky. Goldenson deemed the ABC chairman's asking price, $25 million, steep, especially considering that Noble had paid $8 million for NBC Blue in 1943. At the same time, Noble insisted that he retain ultimate authority over ABC's operations and that the network's management team be retained for three years. Noble stood his ground and Goldenson agreed to purchase the network with UPT stock. He then convinced a very reluctant UPT board (most members considered ABC a risky venture at best). The acquisition was announced in late June 1951.[17]

Goldenson's next obstacle proved the most stressful. The FCC had to approve the acquisition, and some commissioners as well as much of the FCC and Justice Department bureaucracies had serious reservations about the combination. UPT's antitrust history, as part of Paramount, cast doubts about its ethical standards. (Goldenson contended that the worst infractions, used to justify the breakup of the theater chains, had occurred in the decade before he joined Paramount.) Worse, some feared that the UPT purchase would represent the beginning of a Hollywood takeover of broadcasting, thus limiting the diversity of voices in mass entertainment. This concern informed Commissioner Frieda Hennock's dissent. When one ABC executive insisted that UPT would make ABC more competitive, Hennock asked, "Is it a crime to be third?"[18]

Although Hennock, the most liberal commissioner, remained beyond conversion, Goldenson and other UPT-ABC witnesses becalmed

most of their critics, at least at the commission. UPT denied having any other agenda but to boost ABC. UPT had the capital—and access to more capital—to finance the programming that would make the network competitive, its representatives testified. And James A. McKenna, an ABC vice president, evoked the classic justification for competition. With more resources, his network would become stronger. "As ABC improves, NBC and CBS in turn will be forced to greater efforts in order to maintain their positions and in turn ABC will be forced to greater efforts, and the competitive spiral will generate and regenerate itself to the ultimate benefit of the public."[19] John Crosby of the *New York Herald Tribune* took up McKenna's argument. The merger should go through, he told readers in late March 1952. "The more networks there are, the more programs the public has to choose from and the better the programs are inclined to be, competition in general being a healthy stimulant to the industry."[20] The commission had to choose between permitting the merger or making a network duopoly permanent, and thus being responsible for ABC's liquidation. No other potential partner stood in the wings ready to save Noble's network. The FCC approved the transaction, five to two, in February 1953. The majority determined that "the proposed merger offers the affirmative benefit of fostering competition."[21]

The FCC's deliberations took their toll. Nineteen months passed between the UPT board's agreement to the ABC acquisition and the commission's blessing of the marriage. In the time the commission took to study and pass on the merger, ABC fell still further behind NBC and CBS. In early 1953, just under two-thirds of all TV homes were unable to receive ABC programs. An angry *Business Week* described the delay as "an outstanding demonstration of how not to handle government regulation of business."[22] "ABC is in danger of procedural strangulation," Crosby charged.[23] The tightfisted Noble personally had to guarantee some lines of credit. With the merger still pending, Crosby sent a *Herald Tribune* reporter to ABC's New York studios. She found most of them vacant most of the time. She did spot one employee—playing solitaire. ABC "is not dead exactly," Crosby wrote. "But it's awfully sleepy."[24]

Once the merger had been permitted, ABC tried to make up for lost time and absent capital. AB-UP embarked on a five-year plan to make the network fully competitive with Columbia and NBC. With Goldenson's help, Kintner signed the established entertainers Ray Bolger and George Jessel. A promising young singer-comedian, Danny Thomas,

agreed to star in a sitcom, *Make Room for Daddy*. "The feeling was universal," the secretary of the AB-UP board enthused in April 1953, "that American Broadcasting Company was on the threshold of better and more prosperous days." "ABC isn't anywhere near CBS or NBC yet in the race for network supremacy," echoed a *Variety* reporter, "but it's out of its stepchild position."[25]

The first programming breakthrough came a year later, when Walt Disney agreed to produce a weekly series for ABC. Although Disney operated a fairly modest, by Hollywood standards, studio in the early 1950s, he had produced, starting with Mickey Mouse, some of the most memorable animated cartoons of the 1930s and 1940s. CBS and especially NBC had tried to persuade Disney to do a TV show. Disney, unlike most of his peers, was hardly camera shy. He had his video debut hosting and producing an NBC special, "One Hour in Wonderland," on Christmas Day 1950. But he had a peculiar demand. In effect, he wanted his network partner to coinvest in an amusement park, Disneyland, which he proposed to construct in Orange County, California. Banks and other lenders had rejected Disney's concept. Amusement parks seemed out of fashion, even though Disney intended to reinvent the institution. Its older, seedy qualities, associated with the larger eastern cities, would be displaced by sanitized middle-class virtues found in the suburbs. NBC's negotiations broke down when Weaver mistakenly left the details to his underlings. Goldenson and Kintner personally dealt with Disney, and committed ABC to Disneyland. Disney in turn agreed to produce an hour-long series for ABC for seven years.[26]

It proved a mutually beneficial partnership. Like Goldenson, Disney considered television an opportunity. Wrote his biographer Richard Schickel, "Disney alone of the moguls—and he was not, at that time, a very big mogul—found a way to use the new medium to his advantage."[27] Anxious to promote his park, Disney dubbed his TV program *Disneyland*. It had far higher production values than most previous filmed programming offered by the networks and possessed a special appeal for children. "'Disneyland' was different," wrote John Crosby, father of young children. "Almost before it went on the air, the children seemed to sense that this was something important. And in polish and finish and all-around theatrical workmanship, of course, 'Disneyland' was infinitely superior to anything the children had been exposed to so far."[28] Aired at 7:30 Wednesday nights beginning in October 1954, *Disneyland* varied its format week to week. Some programs featured anima-

tion, others instructed viewers on science. Many extolled the virtues of Disneyland and Disney feature films. Three hours were devoted to the frontiersman Davy Crockett and inspired a craze for coonskin caps and other attire. "The Ballad of Davy Crockett" was a number one single. *Disneyland* became the first ratings success of ABC under its new owners; it ranked sixth in the 1954–55 and fourth in the 1955–56 Nielsens. In 1955, ABC-TV's gross billings increased 53 percent. "In its essence," wrote one advertising executive, "*Disneyland* made a network for ABC." Disney was soon producing other programs for ABC, beginning with the daily children's program *The Mickey Mouse Club*. All the available advertising for the program had been sold prior to its October 1955 premiere.[29]

A year after the Disney signing, Goldenson and Kintner persuaded a major studio, Warner Brothers, to produce a series for their network. Here Goldenson drew on his longtime friendship—and innumerable tennis matches during trips west—with Warners executive Jack L. Warner. Originally conceived as *Warner Brothers Presents*, Warners offered alternating one-hour-long dramas based on three different feature films, *King's Row*, *Casablanca*, and *Cheyenne*. Each program ended with promotions of the latest Warners theatrical release. Compared to Disney, Warner Brothers struggled producing the series. Its lack of zeal for TV production showed—and did not escape the attention of sponsors. ("A below-standard operation," Kintner reported one sponsor complaining.) "We started off hoping to make good TV," a Warners producer recalled, "but quickly we realized we just had to get them out." Two of the rotating series were dropped. The surviving *Cheyenne*, starring an unknown bit player, Norman Walker, gradually built a following, occasionally besting both Berle and Bob Hope in the ratings during the 1955–56 season. It tied with CBS's *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* for twelfth place in the 1957–58 ratings. *Cheyenne* was a Western, which appealed to children. Often shirtless, the well-developed Walker, renamed "Clint," appealed to many mothers.[30]

By late 1956, or three and a half years after being acquired by UPT, ABC appeared to be on the right course. Disney's programs had won the hearts and minds of baby boomers. They and many of their parents began watching an ABC Western, *The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp*. In its second season, 1956–57, *Wyatt Earp* was ABC's second most popular series. It placed sixth in the 1957–58 Nielsens. There was other good news. ABC's affiliates had increased from 24 in January 1953 to 60 four

years later. Between 1953 and 1956, the network's billings to advertisers had grown more than threefold, from $21.1 million to $76.7 million. "ABC's progress," Jack Gould wrote in April 1956, "is nothing short of miraculous." "In more and more time periods," Dan Seymour of J. Walter Thompson observed later that year, "ABC has asserted its claim to recognition as a third major television network."[31]

Running in Place

Nevertheless, ABC was running in place. NBC's affiliates had risen from 71 in 1953 to 200 in 1956; for the same period, CBS's chain had expanded from 33 to 168. ABC's share of affiliates had actually fallen, from 19.0 to 12.0 percent. The Big Two's combined share of network billings remained stunningly constant, 84.2 percent in both 1952 and 1956. The UPT partnership had saved the network—but not chipped into the huge advantages of Columbia and NBC. ABC earned its first profit in 1955, $481,138 before federal income taxes; that same year NBC had pretax profits of $14.6 million and Columbia $20.4 million. ABC, Goldenson wrote of the network in 1956, "was still struggling mightily."[32]

UPT's pockets were not, in fact, very deep. The theater chain had enough cash to retire debts from the Noble regime and make a few big deals, notably with Disney and Warners. Otherwise, UPT proved cautious. One executive, soon after the merger, spoke of making "hard deals" that kept costs within "a reasonable range."[33] The chief financial officer had to approve the sending of international telegrams. Even after the network began to have some programming successes, things were tight. In 1955, Goldenson recalled, executives had to travel coach. "We cut staff to the bone. We sliced nickels and dimes out of budgets. We did anything we could to save a few dollars."[34] That year, ABC's total expenses ($32.7 million) were roughly a third of CBS's ($101.6 million) and NBC's ($109.8 million).[35]

More than limited financial resources contained ABC. The third network had to reckon with a distribution problem. It was very much a consequence of the FCC's allocation of TV channels. The commission may have forced the creation of ABC, but its actions—more aptly, its incoherence—stunted its ward's growth. ABC, the network complained to the commission late 1955, "had been a principal victim of the unnatural and unnecessary shortage of television outlets."[36]

The FCC frequently took years to assign third channels to certain

markets. The agency complicated the already complex task of assigning hundreds of TV licenses by not adhering to its stated criteria for awarding them. Contested proceedings were handled on a case by case basis. This in turn delayed the granting of licenses in many markets, including Miami and Pittsburgh. In those viewing areas, ABC was shut out—or was the secondary affiliate. As late as mid–1959, ABC lacked any access to the Louisville, Grand Rapids, and Syracuse markets. Recalled one Goldenson aide, "It would be as if *Newsweek* competed with *Time* but couldn't be on the stands in Miami, Boston, Phoenix, and half the other cities."[37]

The fate of one ABC situation comedy offered a case in point. Danny Thomas's *Make Room for Daddy*, which debuted in September 1953, enjoyed some early popularity. Yet the Thomas program never cracked the Nielsen top 25, and by the 1956–57 season it had fallen to a woeful 125th despite middling competition. CBS picked up the series, renamed *The Danny Thomas Show*, the following season. Awarded another time slot, *The Danny Thomas Show* finished number two in the Nielsens. "Frankly, we're producing the same show this year as last," Thomas concluded. "I suppose the network and the time slot are the difference."[38]

How did ABC end up so disadvantaged? Timing was everything. In television's first decade, affiliation agreements worked along the following lines. The first license often went uncontested. With the most ambitious programming, NBC usually persuaded this first channel to be an affiliate. As stations' profit possibilities became apparent, more parties applied for the second and third channels. The commission then had to hold comparative license procedures, which could drag on for months, even years. Pittsburgh did not secure its second commercial channel until 1957. Once authorized, the second station preferred to affiliate with the network offering the most popular programs, either NBC or CBS.

ABC persuaded many stations to be secondary affiliates. They in turn proved highly selective as to which ABC programs they cleared. *Disneyland* found many takers, including 99 stations that shared affiliation agreements with CBS or NBC. Yet only 6 of these carried the program live.[39] In the fifteen largest markets with only two VHF stations, ABC reported in July 1955, the network could clear only eleven of twenty-three programs. Worse, just under half were aired on a delayed basis, that is, off prime time, usually Sunday afternoons or early Sunday eve-

nings when audiences were tiny. Such low clearances understandably concerned advertisers. U.S. Steel moved its hour-long prestige drama, *The U.S. Steel Hour*, to CBS, which offered to carry the program live to 190 stations compared to 75 on ABC.[40] In 1955, Kintner told a Senate committee that the network's inability to clear time for some programs cost ABC $13 million in advertising revenues.[41]

Although the secondary affiliation problem would be significantly overcome once the commission finally awarded licenses in certain markets, the FCC presented ABC with another obstacle. In allocating television frequencies, the commission had chosen to rely on a relatively unproven portion of the radio spectrum, the ultrahigh frequency, stations 14 to 83. The policy might have worked except that most consumers resisted purchasing televisions able to receive the UHF channels. The standard television set had a VHF dial, which received channels 2 through 13; the UHF tuner was an option, costing $35. Most buyers, except for those living in communities served only by UHF channels, would not buy "all-channel" sets. As a result, UHF stations could not reach as many homes, which in turn made them less attractive to potential sponsors. Many UHF channels ceased operations, some of them ABC affiliates. Nine ABC UHF affiliates went dark in 1955 alone. Of the three networks, ABC relied most on UHF channels for affiliates. One ABC executive later likened the dilemma to the network seeking to build a department store in downtown Dallas, only to be told it could only construct one on the outskirts of the city.[42]

Consider the case of Madison, Wisconsin. Although the state's second largest TV market, Madison was too close to Milwaukee and Rockford, Illinois, to receive three VHF channels. The commission allocated the Madison viewing area two UHF (15 and 27) and one VHF (3) channels. The UHF channels were on the air within a year of their availability; NBC affiliated with channel 15 and CBS with channel 27. Many more applied for the channel 3 license, delaying its issuance until 1956. As channel 3 prepared to commence operations, CBS dropped channel 27 in favor of the more powerful VHF. Channel 27 had to settle for an ABC affiliation.[43]

The other networks had their own horror stories. Both CBS and NBC tried to placate the FCC and others by operating UHF affiliates. The commission allowed each network to own an additional two stations if two were on the upper frequency. CBS briefly ran UHF stations in Milwaukee and Hartford. NBC had UHF channels in New Britain,

Connecticut, and Buffalo. WBUF, Channel 17 in Buffalo, was not able to compete against the city's VHF stations. Consequently, the audience share of popular NBC programs fell steeply below national averages. *Dinah Shore* on WBUF had a 13 percent share compared to a national average of 32 percent; *Twenty-One* netted an 11 percent on channel 17 compared to 27 percent nationally. Closing the station in October 1958, NBC signed an affiliation agreement with channel 2, which had been an ABC affiliate. ABC had to wait for another VHF to be awarded among competing applicants.[44] The Buffalo experiment undermined the arguments of CBS and NBC that popular programming alone would salvage UHF stations.

ABC's dependence on UHF was too great a burden for most advertisers. Network executives had to fight to win sponsors for new programs, even *Disneyland;* Kintner and an aide made more than sixty calls (Kintner later said a hundred) before selling out Disney's show. ABC discounted some charges in the long-term hope of establishing a successful schedule. *Warner Brothers Presents* sold out before its debut, but at a loss to the network. In 1956, ABC similarly discounted charges for its most popular sitcom, *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet.* The promising Western *Maverick* similarly was sold its first season at below production and time costs.[45]

A worse fate befell the network in 1954. Kintner thought he had scored a major coup when he negotiated a $2.5 million agreement to televise NCAA football games for the fall 1954 season. In addition to airing thirteen games, the network would produce an additional twenty-six weeks of college sporting events. The deal quickly turned sour, however. To Kintner's dismay, General Motors, which had sponsored the games on NBC the previous year, refused to continue doing so on ABC. The network had to discount rates so severely that ABC lost $1.8 million on the transaction. Although small change to subsequent generations of TV deal makers, it upset ABC's frail financial health. Kintner ordered all departments to cut their budgets 20 percent. Among the worst affected was the modest ABC News division.[46]

Like other sponsors, GM prized a network's reach. Lacking comparable clearances, ABC overall had a higher cost-per-thousand. In evening prime time during November–December 1956, CBS claimed a $2.86 CPM compared to NBC's $4.03 and ABC's $4.76.[47]

Most sponsors considered ABC their third option. As the total demand for network hours increased, some clients faced a dilemma. If

they sought a specific time, they might find themselves standing in line behind two or more other advertisers. Eastman Kodak, a J. Walter Thompson client, confronted this problem. For the 1956–57 season, Kodak wanted to sponsor a program on Wednesday evenings but found all available slots taken on Columbia and NBC. Dan Seymour of JWT persuaded Kodak to take *Ozzie and Harriet* on ABC.[48]

ABC frequently had to accept projects rejected by the Big Two and sometimes gained at their expense. Two of the network's most popular late 1950s series, *The Lawrence Welk Show* and *The Real McCoys*, had been turned down by Columbia and NBC. ABC secured *The Untouchables* only after CBS rejected an option to pick up the series. When negotiations between CBS and producers over renewing the sitcom *Leave It to Beaver* after one season fell part, ABC grabbed the program. It ran for four more years on that network. More often, however, ABC had to slate series without promise or, in the case of *The Voice of Firestone*, which NBC dropped in 1954, without many viewers.[49]

In other ways, ABC could not compete with the Big Two. ABC's heavy reliance on secondary affiliations discouraged live telecasts, which were less likely to be carried live by secondary affiliates. ABC thus had to rely more on filmed programs. In March 1956, 59.8 percent of all ABC programming was on film, compared to 18.5 percent at CBS and 10.0 percent at NBC.[50] When Weaver launched his NBC "spectaculars" in September 1954, Columbia modestly imitated its rival. Not ABC. Quite aside from lacking the financial resources or enthusiasm for the concept, ABC lacked the primary affiliates to justify specials to potential advertisers.[51]

That ABC became known as "the film network" was not anticipated when UPT management testified before the FCC. Goldenson extolled the virtues of simultaneous transmission. "The real vitality in the future of television is in live broadcasting," he told the commission in March 1952.[52] Perhaps the theater executive was trying to mollify regulators who feared he would turn ABC into a Hollywood spigot. Yet ABC's dependence on filmed programming actually did decline during UPT's first years of ownership.[53]

In promoting the acquisition of ABC in 1951 and 1952, Goldenson apparently had not realized how disadvantaged his new enterprise would be. He seemed oblivious to the potential problems that the FCC's allocation of licenses posed for the third-place network. Even Allen B. Du Mont, the most forceful critic of the FCC's mixing of frequencies in the

same market, told the commission in early 1952 that lifting the four-year freeze on awarding licenses would greatly benefit both of the small networks.[54] It did not. Indeed, in the short run, the position of both ABC and Du Mont declined after the freeze was lifted in April 1952.

By 1954, ABC executives were leading the charge to correct the imperfections of the FCC's station allocation plan. "There is a kind of monopoly in the television business," Kintner told the Senate Commerce Committee in 1956. "It is a government-created monopoly based on the lack of at least three comparable television stations in the top population markets of the country." The network proposed a massive revision of the Sixth Report and Order, which included moving some VHF frequencies to larger cities and converting some markets to UHF-only service.[55]

The solution was not painless, and those losing—or fearing they would lose—television service voiced their concerns to the commission and members of Congress. Some living on the fringes of the Fresno viewing area worried that the absence of a VHF channel, with its greater reach, would deny them any TV service. A West Virginia newspaper, which stood to lose its VHF channel, argued that "the public interest is not served by robbing Peter to pay Paul. . . . More benefit would probably accrue [to] ABC than to the public."[56]

Increasingly frustrated by ABC's lack of progress, Goldenson shook up the network leadership. He had acceded to Noble's demand that Kintner remain ABC president for three years after the merger. Goldenson himself took no active role in network operations, other than helping woo some Hollywood studio executives; he devoted, Kintner later remarked, 90 percent of his time to the theater division. Goldenson did not even have an office in the ABC headquarters on West 66th Street until 1955. Deferring to Kintner made sense; Goldenson lacked Kintner's background in radio and television, as well as journalism. Having covered Washington for the *New York Herald Tribune* in the late 1930s, Kintner had many government contacts. His excesses, however, troubled Goldenson. Kintner could be a considerate manager. At least twice in 1953, he found the time to send thoughtful notes praising the young director of ABC live dramas. Yet he could be a tyrant who verbally abused those beneath him. Kintner's "air of tired arrogance," a competitor recalled, "often terrified the help." The mild-mannered Goldenson found such behavior unacceptable. He was also put off by Kintner's drinking; he consumed vodka all day, even keeping

a spare tumbler full in his executive restroom (he drank it neat, hoping visitors would think it water). Goldenson neither smoked nor drank. More exasperating was Kintner's refusal to delegate authority. He dismissed too readily the ideas of Goldenson and others. Most frustrating was Kintner's defeatist attitude. He had been, Goldenson concluded, at the network too long; he was too conditioned to ABC's disadvantages, too inclined to regard the network's distant third-place status as set in stone. "Everyone from Kintner on down," Goldenson wrote, "kept insisting nothing could be done." Goldenson felt differently. AB-UP had to borrow money, he believed, and expand its programming. Kintner disagreed. But his time had expired. Outmaneuvering Noble and other board members loyal to the founder, Goldenson fired Kintner and four of his lieutenants in October 1956.[57]

Kintner was not as tradition-bound as Goldenson remembered. Kintner frequently broke industry rules, if only because his struggling chain had no choice. ABC Radio under Kintner had condoned the use of transcriptions to snare the services of such top performers as Bing Crosby. Kintner similarly understood that ABC Television, because of its small number of primary affiliates, could not offer much live programming, to say nothing of Weaver's elaborate spectaculars. Kintner "had no alternative," *Time* explained later, "if he wanted to save ABC from being crushed by its two bigger competitors."[58]

Finally, Kintner did ABC an enormous favor, a year before his ouster, by rejecting *The $64,000 Question.* Big-money quizzes soon populated the Columbia and NBC schedules. But Kintner had spared his network much embarrassment when most of the programs were found to have been rigged. His decision, he later told *Time*, had nothing to do with that possibility. "It didn't seem to make sense—not, I hasten to add, because of moral grounds."[59] In other ways, however, Goldenson's view of Kintner may not have been far off the mark. Kintner soon moved to NBC. Although he became a forceful proponent of news programming, his overall management of the network was decidedly risk averse.

"A Team That Won't Be Beat Can't Be Beat"

Although Weaver met with Goldenson about the vacant network presidency, the ABC chairman had no interest in hiring the former NBC programmer. Goldenson was no cultural missionary; indeed, he possessed the Hollywood sensibility about mass culture that Weaver so frequently condemned. To Goldenson, a successful television net-

work, like a profitable theater chain, succeeded by giving consumers what they wanted (or, more accurately, what management *thought* the customers wanted). Prestige held little value for him. His model was Universal Pictures, Kintner recalled, when it earned money, and not those studios, like MGM or 20th Century Fox, that coveted Academy Awards. Late in his life, when such an admission went essentially unnoticed, Goldenson contended that commercial TV could not cater to "an articulate, educated minority that can afford and appreciate highbrow cultural entertainment. . . . Most Americans can't. They can't afford the ticket prices, and they haven't the educational background to appreciate the fare." Television, he insisted, "isn't a Tiffany business. It's Woolworth and K-Mart."[60]

More than cultural reductionism accounted for Goldenson's attitude. He was an intensely competitive man. One of his dearest recollections was playing quarterback, despite being undersized, for a small high school that had to compete against bigger schools with bigger athletes. He always remembered a college coach's dictum, "A team that *won't* be beat *can't* be beat." It "became my doctrine," he wrote, "and still is."[61]

Goldenson understood that his company's future did not rest with film exhibition. Between 1953 and 1956 AB-UP's income from exhibition had declined from $121.6 to $100.6 million. ABC's contribution to AB-UP's income had risen from 29 percent ($49.8 million) in 1953 to 49.5 percent ($98.6 million) in 1956. The following year, for the first time, AB-UP derived more income from broadcasting than film exhibition.[62] Goldenson poured more of the company's earnings into broadcasting, even though doing so drove earnings per share (exclusive of capital gains) down from $1.70 before the marriage to $1.21 six years later.[63]

In some ways, Goldenson faced a dilemma similar to David Sarnoff's. Forcing Weaver's resignation could be justified in part because RCA's electronics division was underperforming; RCA needed NBC to earn more money. Goldenson's situation, however, was more desperate. The decline of RCA electronics could be and was—in the short run, at least—corrected. AB-UP's film exhibition division was not about to regain its former dominance within the merged firm. The theater chain's situation may have declined more severely than Goldenson had anticipated when he plotted the ABC acquisition. In such a weakened state, the exhibition unit could not subsidize ABC indefinitely. In all likeli-

hood, future overall earnings growth would all but have to flow from AB-UP's broadcast operations. Goldenson did not, as some at ABC had assumed would happen, return to his Paramount Theatres offices on Broadway once he assembled a management team to replace Kintner's. The chairman remained on West 66th Street.[64]

AB-UP's less than robust fiscal condition hardly inhibited Goldenson: he understood the need to take chances. And with this sensibility in mind, Goldenson named Oliver Treyz as Kintner's successor. He had neither Weaver's commitment to culture nor Kintner's to journalism. He also lacked the latter's many Washington contacts. Although Treyz's political cluelessness eventually destroyed him, in the short term he was a superb choice. He possessed, at thirty-eight, an energy and enthusiasm that Kintner lacked. With his crewcut and chunky build, Treyz "looks like and often behaves with the exuberance of a middle-aged cheerleader," wrote one show business reporter. Yet he was the cheerleader who had done well in math. Treyz had worked in advertising and, before a falling out with Kintner, at ABC. Like Stanton of CBS, Treyz fervently believed in audience research, though he was far more willing than his Columbia counterpart to use surveys of viewers to cast new rules for the newest medium.[65]

Treyz honored some industry practices. Like his counterparts at Columbia, Treyz accepted the habit principle. NBC had erred in investing so heavily in special programs. "We believe television is a habit medium," he remarked in 1959. Moreover, ABC's own research had refuted Weaver's assertion that spectaculars reached more viewers over a four-week period than a regular series.[66]

At the same time, Treyz was more apt than Kintner to violate the rules. While working under Kintner, Treyz initiated the concept of "bridging." Goldenson latter dubbed this one of Treyz's "fundamental, strategic contributions to ABC." Over Kintner's objections, ABC scheduled *Disneyland* for the fall 1954 season at 7:30 Wednesdays. The convention had been to put off major network programming until 8:00 p.m. In the 7:00 to 8:00 hour, the networks telecast news and fifteen-minute entertainment series. But ABC's own research suggested the network should slate more ambitious prime-time series at 7:30. If the hour-long Disney program drew viewers, especially the young, few would switch at 8:00 to *Arthur Godfrey* or the NBC sitcom *I Married Joan*. Children might decide the matter. "It has long been known by researchers that children have a great deal to do with dominating a

television program decision, when parents will do almost anything to keep them quiet before bedtime," an *Ad Age* columnist argued. "It takes a powerful adult show to force the parents to wrench the set away from the little bullies." Godfrey's Wednesday night program did not fall into this category. It quickly fell to thirty-fourth in the ratings. Even Godfrey admitted, "I love Disney. I wish I didn't have to work Wednesday night and could stay home to watch his show." It was the beginning of the end for Godfrey. Joan Davis, the star of *I Married Joan*, quit. "Miss Davis explained that she was weary from sustained film making," Jack Gould reported. "But it was no secret that her sponsor was not eager to tangle further with Mickey Mouse, et al."[67] Scheduling more aggressively at 7:00 and 7:30, notably in airing shows appealing to children, ABC undercut the ratings for the CBS and NBC newscasts, as well as NBC's *Nat King Cole*.[68]

Bridging extended to late afternoon prime time. ABC scheduled *The Mickey Mouse Club* at 5:00 p.m. beginning in October 1955. It came half an hour before network television's longest franchise in children's programming, NBC's *Howdy Doody Show*. Children who had begun viewing the hour-long *Mickey Mouse Club* would not switch to Howdy a half hour later. *The Mickey Mouse Club* soon had the highest ratings in the history of daytime TV. Among the converted was the son of one of the writers of NBC's show. His mother admonished him to watch *Howdy Doody*. "Who was she kidding?" he recalled. "What did she think I was, a baby? I was in love with these kids on this new show, and no amount of familial pressure was going to keep me from watching *The Mickey Mouse Club*." *Howdy Doody* was soon relegated to the Saturday morning schedule. NBC dropped the program five years later.[69]

A second and more powerful strategy was "counterprogramming." The concept was simple enough. Even an established program might suffer viewer defections if ABC "countered" by scheduling a different type of series. "ABC had a programming idea that reeks of genius," wrote one Los Angeles TV columnist. "Whatever NBC or CBS runs at any given time will be ABC's cue to run a different kind of show."[70] In fact, this was not a new approach. ABC Radio had knocked Fred Allen off the air by slating a quiz program, *Stop the Music*, during the 1948–49 season against the comedian's greatly admired comedy revue program.[71] Weaver's Monday night spectaculars were intended to be lavish alternatives to sitcoms, including *I Love Lucy*, on CBS. ABC's counterprogramming offensive actually commenced in January 1954, when the network

scheduled an hour-long drama, *The Mask*, against the popular variety hours, *Toast of the Town* on CBS and *Colgate Comedy Hour* on NBC.[72] Although *The Mask* failed to find an audience, the strategy succeeded remarkably well that fall when *Disneyland* debuted against *Arthur Godfrey and Friends* on CBS and two sitcoms on NBC. Starting *Disneyland* a half hour earlier helped. It captured and held young (and many adult) viewers. The youngest audience members had probably never been attracted to Godfrey or NBC's *I Married Joan* and *My Little Margie*. Godfrey's limited talent and boundless ego had worn out his welcome in some TV homes. His Wednesday show, in show business parlance, had lost its legs. Jack Gould judged that it had been "a tired operation for at least a season or two."[73]

ABC similarly ended Milton Berle's dominance by scheduling a Western, *Cheyenne*, a half hour early against the comedian. Again, this contradicted industry practice. "According to my informants," *Cheyenne*'s unnerved producer wrote Jack Warner, "it is almost a truism that no hour dramatic show *has ever* succeeded in the time-slot ABC has given us."[74] Although slower to develop a following, *Cheyenne* was eventually one of ABC's most popular series. Berle's brash, big-city comedy did not appeal to some of the newer set owners, many of whom happened to live in the smaller cities and towns where Western films remained popular. A decline in the quality of the writing of Berle's comedy sketches did not help.[75]

Treyz had more than calculation—he had money. Soon after Kintner's ouster, AB-UP secured a $65 million loan from Metropolitan Life and five banks to expand both its broadcast and theater divisions. (As a *Fortune* correspondent noted, AB-UP's theaters were undervalued, greatly easing borrowing.) "The rubber band came off the bankroll," *Variety* chimed. The network constructed a Television Center in Los Angeles. In one of the many signs of the changing of the guard, ABC's TV Center was the site of the Vitagraph studio where the first sound picture, *The Jazz Singer*, had been filmed. Some money went to signing popular performers like the singers Frank Sinatra and Pat Boone; neither of their programs proved popular. Better spent were investments in developing filmed series with relatively unknown players. Over the next five years, through the 1960–61 season, ABC built a more competitive schedule.[76]

Treyz relied heavily on a small number of producers, none more than Warner Brothers. After its early struggles, Warners began to display

more adroitness in creating series, mainly hour-long Westerns and detective dramas. The studio's success can be mainly attributed to the producer and writer Roy Huggins. His Western, *Maverick*, which debuted in September 1957, gently mocked many of the genre's conventions, starting with having the protagonist heroically challenged. It was a Western that appealed to young and old alike.[77] A year later, Warners scored another triumph with 77 *Sunset Strip*, about private detectives in Los Angeles. Again, a popular cultural form, the detective drama, was tweaked. The show had little in common with the hard-boiled detective fiction of Dashiel Hammett and Raymond Chandler. The detectives on 77 *Sunset Strip* were well educated and well off. And they were handsome. The supporting characters included Edd Byrnes, who played an attractive adolescent parking lot attendant, Kookie. Byrnes became a momentary teenage sensation. His duet with Connie Stevens, "Kookie, Kookie (Lend Me Your Comb)," rose to number three on the *Billboard* chart. "Nothing seems really to be new on television this season," wrote one TV columnist of the program, "so the next best hope would seem to be something old done exceptionally well, and that is what Warners managed to accomplish with the durable old private-eye stuff."[78]

Both *Maverick* and 77 *Sunset Strip* proved popular. A successful exercise in bridging, *Maverick* aired on Sundays at 7:30, or a half hour before *The Ed Sullivan Show*, which fell out of the Nielsen top twenty-five. "*Maverick* has changed the Sunday evening viewing habits across the country," the network boasted in its 1957 annual report.[79] The Western finished sixth in its second season (1958–59). And 77 *Sunset Strip* had similar appeal; after a year on the air, it tied for sixth in the 1959–60 Nielsens.

Warners had three other ratings draws. All were Westerns, though none as quirky as *Maverick*. In both *Cheyenne* and *Sugarfoot*, the protagonists traveled from town to town and story to story. *The Lawman* concerned a sheriff and his young deputy in Laramie, Wyoming. As Christopher Anderson noted, it closely resembled CBS's popular *Gunsmoke*. The sheriff most often found himself disciplining drifters who, in other Warners series, were the heroes.[80] *The Lawman* finished fifteenth in the 1959–60 Nielsens.

Treyz added to the Western emphasis through "thematic" scheduling. Weaver had divided the evening schedule with an eye to programming that would appeal first to children, then only adults. Treyz made no such distinction. On Sunday nights in the fall of 1958, ABC

had *Maverick* followed by *Lawman* then *Colt .45*. On Tuesdays that season came another Western conga line: *Cheyenne* then *Wyatt Earp* then *The Rifleman*. On those nights the next year came a similar succession of Westerns. The assumption was that viewers would be less likely to change channels.[81]

ABC's Western accent was no accident. Treyz left nothing to intuition. An ABC-commissioned study by Nielsen, conducted in early 1957, indicated that adult Western series were watched in nearly the same number of homes as other program types, but with greater frequency week to week. Compared to other program genres, 40 percent more men watched adult Westerns and 13 percent more women. The larger total audiences for adult Westerns, in turn, made them more cost efficient to advertisers. Among the converted was Procter and Gamble, the largest buyer of TV time. P&G had spurned ABC until the fall of 1957, when it began sponsoring *The Rifleman*.[82]

All in all, ABC had become much more competitive. Third stations began operating in such viewing areas as Boston, Miami, and Pittsburgh, providing ABC with much-needed basic affiliates and viewers, Treyz declared, a "new freedom of choice."[83] Many Americans were, in fact, switching to ABC. Four of the network's shows finished in the top ten 1958–59 Nielsens; five years earlier, it had none in the first twenty-five. ABC telecast six of the twenty-six highest rated programs that season—as many as NBC. "The big two is now the big three," Treyz told *Forbes* in June 1959. Even CBS-TV president James W. Aubrey Jr. acknowledged in early 1961 the "evolution of a three network rivalry."[84]

Comparisons were instructive. ABC's gains came largely at the expense of NBC, which was still reeling from Weaver's neglect of the weekly series. In 1958–59, ABC had twice as many top ten programs as NBC. Columbia, in contrast, continued to dominate evening prime time, with fourteen of the top twenty-six. The pattern held in the 1959–60 season. Although only one ABC series, *77 Sunset Strip*, finished in the top ten, the network placed six other programs in the first twenty-five. The hapless NBC had only three. ABC bragged that, where not disadvantaged by inadequate affiliates, it had come down to a contest between itself and CBS.[85] ABC's overall progress in the late 1950s was impressive. Between 1955 and 1961, its share of the three-network billings to advertisers had risen from 12.6 to 25.4 percent.[86]

ABC's success decided one issue. By relying so heavily on filmed series, ABC had proven Weaver wrong. Audiences would not be lost if

live programming declined. "Light viewers" might be disenchanted by the programming tendencies that ABC encouraged, and many were. But many more heavy viewers filled living rooms with newly installed sets to view some of the network's programs. When Robert Kintner became chief programmer at NBC, he did not turn to Fred Coe or Max Liebman to fill holes in NBC's fall 1957 schedule; he brought in Sonny Werblin of MCA. When Paley named a new president of CBS Television, he did not promote Hubbell Robinson, who had crafted some of the network's more admired programs, including *The Phil Silvers Show* and *Playhouse 90*. He named Aubrey, a protégé of Oliver Treyz's and champion of action series. Of ABC's rise, Aubrey immodestly declared, "Oliver Treyz and I did it all."[87]

Original dramas became more and more infrequent. CBS's *Playhouse 90* was among the last to depart, finished off in the ratings by ABC's *Untouchables*. The gangbusters drama, one critic observed, caused more than a 50 percent decline in *Playhouse 90*'s total audience.[88] Anthologies all but disappeared. "Five years ago," Erik Barnouw remarked in 1961, "television said to the writer: 'Write us a play.' There were in the mid-fifties at least a dozen television series which invited the writer to submit plays, without imposing specific formulas. The play was the thing." The sign had been put away. "Today there is really no reason for any new writer to turn to television."[89]

Not surprisingly, champions of original dramas blamed ABC, if only in part, for its decline. ABC's programmers, the producer David Susskind charged, "have deliberately debased programming standards, indulging the cheapest and most vicarious kind of programming, in the conviction that the largest audience will automatically adhere to that kind of programming. They have been uniquely successful." NBC and CBS had no choice but to imitate "this kind of programming." "ABC is beneath discussion," Susskind told the FCC. "It seems to be a combination of Wild West Magazine and True Story and Real Mysteries. I think it should be taken to task, soon and severely."[90] Among the more severe critics was John Crosby, who had favored the ABC-UPT merger. In a late 1959 television interview, the columnist dismissed ABC's "B-picture programs" and deemed its influence over the medium "pernicious."[91]

ABC did not kill the anthology dramas, it simply hurried their departure. It was a case of shooting the wounded. Given a choice, the newer members of the television audience, in smaller cities and towns in the South and West, preferred ABC action dramas to original tele-

plays. At the same time, many of those close to the anthologies admitted to a certain artistic exhaustion. The demands of writing so many teleplays, and producing them live, week in, week out, had begun to take their toll. *Playhouse 90* simply lost direction during its final season. "It did not stand out as much as it had in the past," Hubbell Robinson admitted.[92] Asked if ABC should be blamed for ending the golden age of television, Frank Stanton diplomatically responded, "I choose to think perhaps it was more due to saturation and fatigue."[93]

It is also worth noting *which* ABC series helped knock off the anthologies. *Playhouse 90*'s demise at the hands of Elliot Ness seemed proof enough of melodrama's triumph over drama. But two other anthologies, *Studio One* and *Robert Montgomery Presents*, struggled against one of Lawrence Welk's corny musical programs. In December 1956, *Lawrence Welk's Top Tunes and New Talent* had larger Nielsen ratings than the two anthologies combined.[94] Montgomery's program not only had to fend off Welk but the CBS sitcom *December Bride*. ABC's *Real McCoys*, and not a Warners adventure show, lowered the ratings for CBS's anthology *Climax*.

In addition to building an inventory of popular series, Treyz had to sell them. Some potential sponsors continued to discriminate against ABC because of its persistent distribution disadvantages. The challenge hardly daunted Treyz. He offered generous discounts and encouraged advertisers to buy partial sponsorship on different nights. And he contended that ABC viewers had added value. Research commissioned by the network and conducted by the sociologist Paul F. Lazarsfeld of Columbia University offered two promising findings. First, popular CBS and NBC programs featuring performers who had worked in radio tended to have older audiences. Older audiences, Lazarsfeld contended, should be less desirable to advertisers. They were less likely to consider the new products and brands that advertised heavily on television. To increase its share of the national audience and network advertising, ABC should slate programs that appealed to younger viewers, especially the younger families with children. They were the most sought-after citizens of the consumer republic. The composition of a program's audience could be as important as its size.[95]

Treyz became a tireless advocate of this principle. Although it became a common calculation in television ad buying, it was not an easy sell in the late 1950s. "Demographic" buys were spurned by major agencies. Except for those few clients targeting specific subgroups of

opinion leaders, Madison Avenue focused exclusively on audience ratings. Undaunted, Treyz—and Goldenson—argued for a new approach. The families watching ABC programs might be fewer in number than those for CBS and NBC, but they were younger, were more likely to have children, and therefore were more likely to try the products advertised on television. "Get them at the get age," declared a 1958 network promotional flier.[96] ABC Westerns starred "good-looking virile types," Goldenson explained, appealing to young mothers. "The women like to look at them." And it was "the young housewife—one cut above the teen-ager—with two to four kids, who has to buy the clothing, the food, the soaps, the home remedies."[97] "We're programming for the younger, larger families," Treyz declared, "the ones with more teeth to brush, more bodies to bathe, more hair to shampoo."[98]

The demographic pitch represented what became the defining characteristic of ABC in the late 1950s and 1960s. Mired in third place, stymied by an unequal distribution of TV channels, ABC could not play by the rules of NBC and Columbia. The Big Two could stage spectaculars and invest heavily in news programming. ABC would not overtake them with such exercises in cultural and corporate citizenship. Nor would it mimic CBS's and NBC's established approach to entertainment. Whenever possible, ABC would present series that appealed to a specified segment of the mass audience.

ABC's approach represented an effective strategy for a business competing with one or more dominant firms. Analyzing rivalries among the market leaders in soft drinks, retailing, and automobile manufacturing, Richard S. Tedlow found that newer entrants had a choice. They could attempt to imitate the dominant firm like Coca-Cola and Ford. However, precisely because of the leading firm's many advantages, this was not the more promising option. Successful rivals fashioned a "new competition," that is, they won, or at least greatly improved their own market share, by competing on different terms. This new competition involved market segmentation. General Motors could not have created a better, lower-priced automobile than Ford's Model T, but GM could offer buyers a variety of models. Pepsi-Cola gained at Coke's expense partly through imagery. Pepsi advertising persuaded at least some consumers that Pepsi was the drink for the young and active.[99]

ABC also made a virtue out of necessity. It had to rely to a great measure on younger, unknown, and less expensive talent in shows produced by Warners, Disney, and others. There were exceptions, to be

sure, notably the aging character actor Walter Brennan, star of *The Real McCoys*. In the case of that program, the casting of a young Dick Crenna and others provided younger viewers with a generational identity. The leads for most of ABC's popular series were young men who possessed a certain interchangeability. When Clint Walker held out for a bigger contract and percentage of the residuals, ABC stood by Warner Brothers' refusal to renegotiate. Replaced for one season by another contract performer, Walker disappeared from *Cheyenne*, except for some reruns, with no ill effects on the ratings.[100]

Advertisers split over ABC's approach. Agencies surveyed by *Broadcasting* in mid–1960 found increased respect for ABC's growing audiences. And some automobile companies saw merit in demographic buys. Pontiac, which positioned itself as a sportier division of General Motors, sponsored ABC's detective series *Surfside 6*, with its youthful cast of handsome detectives. But stressing younger viewers made ABC shows less appealing to Oldsmobile, which targeted older, more upper-income buyers.[101] More commonly, ABC suffered from a discrimination akin to that endured by the daily newspaper with second- or third-best circulation; advertisers preferred number one. One cigarette maker, an FCC official reported in 1961, was "interested in [the] *size of [the] audience*."[102]

When claiming that ABC was the network of the young families eager to consume, Treyz and others rarely mentioned *The Lawrence Welk Show*. ABC took the program, originally a 1955 summer replacement, because Welk had an insistent sponsor, Dodge. Indeed, Dodge's agency threatened to pull Dodge's other ABC programs unless the network accepted Welk's program. Kintner considered Welk a "cornball" and told Dodge's ad agent to see a psychiatrist. Yet he agreed to schedule the show. It featured Welk and his orchestra playing "champagne music," in truth, old standards. The program commanded no critical attention. "It was and is corn to the corniest degree," wrote one columnist. "But corn is always tasty." Very tasty indeed. The program's ratings rose from 7.1 to 32.5 in less than a year. Welk's success, Victoria E. Johnson later argued, can be seen as a mass rejection of the eastern, cosmopolitanism that many network programmers assumed the mass audience preferred. (Welk himself had not performed in New York City in many years and, when invited to perform at Carnegie Hall, claimed he did not know where it was.) The son of German immigrants, Welk had grown up in rural North Dakota and never discarded his small-town moral-

ity. He reputedly fired his most popular singer in 1959 for exposing too much of her knee during a performance. Undisputed was Welk's strict censorship of songs; a committee reviewed all lyrics for double entendres. For similar reasons, he would not include comic sketches, a variety show staple, or have prominent guest stars—partly because he could not so closely oversee their material. He would offer nothing but his regular cast of singers and dancers. (He preferred referring to them as his "family.") This kept costs down, making its cost-per-thousand all the more impressive when it more than held its own against some NBC spectaculars in 1955 and 1956. Nor was his fan base confined to smaller markets; his Saturday night program finished fifth in Boston the week of March 1–7, 1960. In Los Angeles, Walt Disney's wife, Lillian, was a regular viewer. For three seasons, Welk hosted two, hour-long prime-time programs. Welk's popularity was a mixed blessing, however. Subsequent surveys confirmed that its appeal, Lillian Disney notwithstanding, tended to the lower tier of the demographic ladder: viewers with annual incomes under ten thousand dollars, a grade-school education, and more than fifty years old. Even an ABC executive admitted to the program's "old-age bias."[103]

The popularity of another ABC program evidenced the resilience of the small-town, less cosmopolitan taste. *The Real McCoys*, premiering in October 1957, concerned a farm family who left West Virginia for California's San Fernando Valley. The family's relocation was not nearly so stark or comical as on CBS's *Beverly Hillbillies* several years later. Still, *McCoys* started the migration of rural sitcoms to network television. After a year, *McCoys* finished eighth in the Nielsens. It ranked eleventh in 1959–60 and fifth the following season. The series' success was telling for several reasons. As in the case of *Lawrence Welk*, *McCoys* was a leftover. NBC, which had an option on the series, thought the program's rural shtick would not appeal to big-city audiences. (The program had been conceived by a New Yorker who, *TV Guide* reported, "had never seen a real hillbilly in his life.") The show's drawing power similarly startled the ad agency overseeing the program. *The Real McCoys*, confessed an ad executive, "has greatly exceeded our expectations." For his part, Goldenson was not surprised. The concept reminded him of the popular, if critically dismissed, Ma and Pa Kettle feature films. Then, too, the program debuted as television itself was reaching into the smaller cities and towns where viewers might identify with the McCoys. The series finished off NBC's New York–based quiz program *Twenty-One*.[104]

The appeal of series like *The Real McCoys* was not restricted to those "head of the creek" families, the newest members of the television audience. Some urban viewers, a generation or more removed from farm life, found themselves preferring the antics of Grandpa McCoy and his clan over more "sophisticated" fare. Many city dwellers similarly liked Westerns. For the third week of October 1959, five of the ten most popular series in Philadelphia were Westerns; *The Real McCoys* ranked seventh. Westerns held three of the top ten positions in Detroit and Chicago. Only in the Second City, where ABC's station inexplicably struggled for viewers, did *The Real McCoys* not place. In Boston the week of March 1–7, 1960, the Westerns *Wagon Train* and *Gunsmoke* were the two most-watched series. *The Real McCoys* finished sixth. That same week in Buffalo, a community more than a century removed from the frontier experience, *Gunsmoke* and *Wagon Train* ranked second and third (behind ABC's *Untouchables*); *The Real McCoys* placed eighth.[105]

By design and by happenstance, ABC had come upon one of the secrets to successful television programming to a national audience. Viewers in smaller towns would not be force fed. Given the choice, they rejected variety shows hosted by Berle or specials starring Noel Coward in favor of the tried-and-true filmed fare. And many of their big-city relations found themselves in agreement.

The Hazards of Imitation

At about this time, ABC fell prey to one of the great temptations of mass culture management. It tried to imitate its own success. Treyz and others pressed producers to create still more Westerns and detective series. By October 1959, Westerns populated just over 25 percent of ABC's evening schedule; detective shows, about 20 percent. "Adventure drama," which included non-Western, nondetective action series like *Adventures in Paradise*, occupied another 13.5 percent. Situation comedy, by comparison, absorbed less than 10 percent. When Disney proposed creating some comedy series, the network said no. "They kept insisting I do more and more Westerns," Disney complained. All in all, 69 percent of new programs during the 1959–60 season on ABC were action/adventure dramas.[106] Warners, the network's biggest producer, was shooting so many action dramas on its lot that gunshots from one production occasionally disrupted the filming of another.[107]

This emphasis carried two risks. The first was that viewers would tire of the genres. Goldenson and others concluded, from their years

in film exhibition, that the demand for Westerns and detective stories was inelastic. But it would be sorely tested as Columbia and NBC began to respond to ABC's strategy by scheduling more Westerns and crime shows. "They started to embrace our philosophy of action," Goldenson remarked.[108] This flooded the schedule with cowboys and private eyes. One study of prime-time programming found that action-adventure series between 1956 and 1960 increased 1200 percent on NBC alone. The fall 1959 season included twenty-nine Westerns on the three networks compared to three four years earlier. "There is no question," Robert W. Sarnoff admitted, "that [ABC's] program schedule has caused us and CBS to make a number of changes."[109]

Skillful scheduling and savvy productions at the other networks could undermine ABC's gains. Ever agile about such matters, CBS began slating more major series at 7:30; NBC soon followed.[110] *Disneyland* had been the new regime's first great ratings winner, but its ratings slipped during the 1957–58 season. NBC took up the bridging strategy, moving its evening newscast, *The Huntley Brinkley Report*, to an earlier time slot and slotting an hour-long entertainment series, *Wagon Train*, at 7:30 against Disney's program. *Wagon Train* was very much an adult Western; one critic dubbed it a "horse oater." An impressive list of guest stars joined the permanent cast that ran the wagon train to California. MCA, which produced the series, had little difficulty recruiting leading players for the program and with keeping its costs in line. *Wagon Train* proved one of NBC's few prime-time hits of the late 1950s. *Wagon Train* finished twenty-third its first season, then second the next three, knocking *Disneyland* out of the Nielsen top ten. During the 1961–62 season, it was the most popular program on television.[111]

Fostering the trend to more violent programming created another problem for ABC. The earliest Westerns on television, starring Hopalong Cassidy and Roy Rogers, were rather tame affairs; their reticence regarding violence had been no accident. Producers had assumed impressionable young boys made up the bulk of their audience. Most adult Westerns, in contrast, had older viewers and portrayed violence more realistically, as did many of the detective and crime dramas. As a result, subsequent calculations by the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence suggested that ABC, by scheduling and encouraging its competitors to telecast more action programs, brought more violence to television.[112] In a letter to the FCC, an angry Mt. Vernon, N.Y., high school principal proposed that the commission

order ABC off the air. "Nothing would please me more than to see the ABC network given a suspension for at least a short period or some other appropriate penalty because of the low quality of its programs." And he owned a small amount of ABC stock.[113]

Instead, ABC kept raising the ante. *The Untouchables* was especially violent. Janet Kern, TV critic for the *Chicago American*, termed the premiere episode a "superbly done performance of gore, grimness." The gore proved too much over time. Pressure from parents and others caused ABC's Cleveland affiliate, WEWS, to drop the program in July 1961. Both the station and the network suffered. Cleveland was then one of the nation's ten largest markets. And WEWS had discarded a series that had been immensely popular in the city, earning a 50 percent audience share some nights, and that had been the number one program in the Arbitron ratings in late 1960.[114]

ABC had another comparative weakness. Both NBC and CBS over the course of the 1950s had developed powerful daytime schedules. Columbia had proven especially adept at building an inventory of popular soap operas. Although daytime programs might take years to develop audiences, they could be significant revenue producers. ABC chose to concentrate on evening programming. Except for *The Mickey Mouse Club*, early efforts, notably a daily run of British feature films, failed to interest many viewers or affiliates. Only in 1957 and 1958 did the network begin to produce some daytime series.

Of these, just one, *American Bandstand*, which debuted in August 1957, achieved success. *Bandstand* had been produced by ABC's Philadelphia affiliate beginning in October 1952. The host, Bob Horn, interviewed guests and played records, and local teens danced. Horn's sexual relations with an adolescent girl forced his ouster. He was replaced by Dick Clark, a boyishly handsome commercial pitchman. With Clark as the emcee, *American Bandstand* became a huge hit for ABC. Once again, however, ABC owed its good fortune to a competitor's misjudgment. NBC first considered picking up the program, then backed out. *Bandstand* held a special attraction for the cash-starved third network. Like Welk's program, *Bandstand* was relatively inexpensive, giving it an impressive cost-per-thousand. It constituted a beachhead for rock 'n' roll, hugely popular among the nation's adolescents.[115]

The success of *Bandstand* proved hard to extend. The rest of ABC's daytime schedule remained largely unwatched. In 1964, ABC accounted for only 20 percent of the daytime advertising billings, compared to 49

percent for CBS and 31 percent for NBC.[116] Nor could *Bandstand* be easily translated into evening prime time. Although teens took up rock 'n' roll, few adults liked the music. And giving rock 'n' roll too much air time risked alienating older viewers. (A prime-time version of *Bandstand* flopped.) More often, evening prime-time program producers tried to reconcile adolescent viewers through minor concessions. Popular performers like Elvis Presley appeared on variety shows otherwise populated by acts appealing to mainstream audiences. Some sitcoms, including *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, had teenage sons take up rock 'n' roll singing. ABC had, in fact, found the perfect compromise. *Bandstand* was scheduled in the late afternoon. Teens returning from school could watch the show without objection from parents who were still at work or preparing dinner. (The show did appeal to some younger, stay-at-home mothers.)

Whatever misgivings some parents had about rock 'n' roll (and the music and many of its adherents did alarm some guardians), *Bandstand* was decidedly unthreatening. The adolescents seen dancing, all from Philadelphia high schools, dressed up for their video work; none looked like a refugee from a Marlon Brando biker film. To placate critics who objected to the music's encouragement of race mixing, producers limited the number of blacks allowed on the set. None did more to convey the show's harmlessness than the host Dick Clark. In his coat and tie and neat hair, he was a very respectable presence. He was, his biographer noted, "a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant who projected mainstream, middle-class values and offered some degree of order and decorum."[117]

What Might Have Been

In retrospect, ABC may have erred in trying to fashion a new competition. It might have been better served imitating Columbia, instead of itself. CBS had scheduled its share of Westerns. Although Goldenson took credit for the trend, Columbia helped usher in the adult Western with *Gunsmoke* in 1955 and *Have Gun, Will Travel* two years later.[118] Two more, *Wanted: Dead or Alive* and *Rawhide*, also proved very popular. But Columbia was careful not to overstock its shelf with Westerns. Paley insisted on more "balance" in the late 1950s. And, as Michael Dann, who joined CBS in the late 1950s, remarked, "This balance has given CBS the leadership."[119] CBS continued to schedule established situation comedies, including two that had aired on rival networks, *Make Room for Daddy* and *Father Knows Best*, as well as new ones. The

show business rule was that successful situation comedies took too long to develop followings. Yet ABC did not have to wait long for *The Real McCoys* to find an audience. Another ABC sitcom, *My Three Sons*, which debuted in September 1960, quickly became a viewer favorite, finishing thirteenth in the 1960–61 Nielsens. ABC realized too late the wisdom of CBS's approach.[120]

Goldenson mistakenly confused the film and TV markets. In 1959, he told *TV Guide* "the TV audience, the same as the movie audience, comprises mostly younger people. And that's the audience we cater to."[121] In fact, as Weaver had repeatedly argued, the audiences were not equivalent. Moviemakers had earlier overattended to younger consumers, he remarked, and therefore lost the adult market. Goldenson had a similar "teenage focus."[122] The television audience was larger and older. Lazarsfeld's research notwithstanding, old radio comics like Jack Benny and Red Skelton continued to earn respectable ratings for CBS in the late 1950s.

Columbia offered another lesson. CBS had long recognized the value of news and cultural programming. Columbia's commitment was not always as fervent as some within the network, led by Edward R. Murrow, would have liked. Nonetheless, Columbia understood that such programs, though drawing comparatively few viewers and losing money, created goodwill among the opinion leadership, starting with the best-known television critics and extending to many members of Congress.

ABC, in contrast, was the anti–public service network. After telecasting the Army-McCarthy hearings in the spring of 1954, ABC canceled most of its public affairs programs. The network insisted it had no choice. Its financial health was too precarious. And there was the affiliation problem. Because so many ABC stations shared affiliation agreements with either CBS or NBC, an ABC news or cultural program was less likely to be cleared. Then, too, ABC affiliates tended to be less civic minded. The first license applicants were frequently newspaper publishers and others who regarded their properties as more than potential money-makers. They were more likely to encourage public affairs programming by the networks. ABC affiliates were the third successful applicant for a TV channel. They were not usually so dedicated to minority interest programming. A rival network executive remarked, "The better owners—the good newspapers, the good radio broadcasters—were already locked up [by] NBC or CBS before ABC came around." Such generalizations may appear unfair, but the network in fact spent years trying to overcome affiliate resistance to carrying

news and public affairs programming. In early 1956, the ABC nightly newscast, hosted by John Charles Daly, reached just over half of all TV homes compared to 86 percent for Doug Edwards's CBS program and 93 percent for NBC's *Camel News Caravan.* A New Haven couple complained in 1961 that their local ABC affiliate "carries all the mediocrity put on by that network but fails to carry the few public affairs programs."[123] As late as 1969, one-third of ABC's affiliates refused to clear the network's evening news program. The holdouts included stations in Miami, Boston, and Houston. "Under these circumstances," Martin Mayer wrote, "ABC finds almost no support among its affiliates for 'quality' programming."[124]

Nevertheless, blaming the affiliates is too convenient. The network itself was not an especially good citizen. Goldenson, the industry outsider, remained one, a man whose life had been in film distribution, not broadcasting. A man who dealt with concessionaires, not federal regulators and members of Congress. Goldenson's inability to recognize his new constituency came in 1959, when ABC canceled *The Voice of Firestone*, a half-hour musical program. "The Voice of Firestone never was completely satisfactory to lovers of serious music," mourned *Musical America.* "But it did provide a half hour of familiar classics usually tastefully presented by a symphony orchestra and the pick of the world's distinguished solo artists." *Firestone*, alas, had a small and aging audience, too old for the "get age" network. *Firestone*'s fans, Goldenson commented, aren't "the audience we want anyway." That was a reasonable determination except that his network had earlier promoted its decision to carry the program to curry favor on Capitol Hill. By early 1959, ABC deemed *Firestone* a drag on the Monday night schedule. The networks shared an "abiding fear," Jack Gould wrote, "that even one program with a comparatively low rating may do harm to an entire evening's schedule." For similar reasons, NBC under Weaver, of all people, had dropped *Firestone* five years earlier. But Weaver was about to launch a series of spectaculars, and NBC was not nearly so dependent on the good graces of opinion leaders and regulatory authorities. ABC replaced *Voice* with a Warner Brothers detective drama, *Bourbon Street Beat*, which proved too imitative of 77 *Sunset Strip* to succeed.

Fans of *Firestone*, including U.S. senator A. S. Mike Monroney of Oklahoma, did not go quietly. "Now ABC, apparently prosperous with its two-gun westerns, its 'Maverick,' and whodunits, seems to have gone trigger-happy along with NBC and CBS for the blood and thunder

which fatten the batting average in the daily TV rating services," remarked the Oklahoma Democrat. Even some shareholders complained at the AB-UP annual meeting.[125] The FCC received so many critical inquiries from members of Congress—Democratic and Republican—that the commission, in an unusual gesture, asked the network to justify the cancellation.[126] A politically calculating manager would have handled the Firestone program more shrewdly, finding another time slot to placate its middlebrow enthusiasts. Before Congress or the FCC, Goldenson or his lieutenants could have, in the manner of Stanton of CBS, played up ABC's sacrifice of potential revenues by retaining the program. This would have netted the network much needed goodwill. *Voice*'s viewers were far more likely than others to write the FCC and members of Congress. All in all, ABC was gaining ground without impressing those who monitored the newest medium. ABC, wrote one industry reporter in 1960, "has made it clear that it is out for ratings rather than the compliments of television critics."[127]

Nor did Goldenson appreciate the public relations value to news programming. ABC News had virtually no presence on the schedule after mid–1954, except for John Charles Daly's nightly newscast. "Our entire news operation," one network official confessed, "amounted to putting John Daly on the air for fifteen minutes a night. Period." In his memoir, Goldenson rather innocently recounted an encounter with Senator John O. Pastore of Rhode Island, the second-ranking Democrat on the Commerce Committee, in late 1960. Pastore privately urged him to beef up ABC's news division "if you're ever going to build ABC in the eyes of the Senate and the House."[128] The lecture came nearly eight years after the AB-UP merger.

In truth, ABC had begun to expand, always in moderation, its news operations a year earlier. Between the 1959–60 and 1960–61 seasons, the network had doubled its expenditures on news, despite slight advertiser interest. A break came in June 1960, when Treyz persuaded Bell and Howell to underwrite a documentary program, *Close-Up!* and to cosponsor a series on Winston Churchill. Treyz, *Variety* chirped, "put a large feather in his network's pubaffair cap, which up till now has been virtually unadorned."[129] Bell and Howell, in turn, gave ABC wide leeway. A *Cleveland Press* TV critic spoke of being "impressed with the sponsor's guts in carrying this controversial material."[130] Robert Lewis Shayon, a well-regarded TV critic, drafted the first two scripts for the network's special series on Churchill. Wrote Bell and Howell executive

Peter G. Peterson, "We are delighted to see that they are getting talent of your quality working on this important new series."[131]

ABC did not try to match the efforts of the Big Two in news. During the 1960–61 season, the network aired just over half as many hours (49) of public affairs programming in evening prime time as NBC (95) and CBS (85).[132] Anxious to contain costs, Goldenson encouraged the network to carry documentary series produced by a unit of Time Inc. ABC News personnel, led by Daly, ardently opposed the move. They wanted, like their counterparts at NBC and CBS, to produce their own news programming. But ABC News lacked the personnel to assemble extended news reports; ABC News in late 1960 had about a fifth as many employees as NBC or Columbia. Daly resigned in frustration, setting back ABC's attempts to enhance its reputation as a news network. Even more damage, however, had been self-inflicted several weeks earlier, when ABC delayed its coverage of the 1960 election—considered a razor-thin contest between Senator John F. Kennedy and Vice President Richard M. Nixon. For one hour, while NBC and Columbia offered the first returns, ABC carried *Bugs Bunny* and *The Rifleman.* Jack Gould cried, "A.B.C. never regained its momentum and looked foolish."[133]

Such episodes ill served ABC when it needed governmental goodwill. Despite the many gains the networks had made in the late 1950s, it remained disadvantaged by the Sixth Report and Order. It depended more on UHF channels for affiliates than Columbia or NBC. During the 1959–60 season, twenty of its ninety-three primary affiliates were on the upper band frequency, twice as many as CBS or NBC. "Intermixed" markets were another ABC headache. Of seventy-five of the largest markets in early 1961, twenty lacked comparable facilities for the three networks. Of these, ABC had UHF channels in sixteen, including Providence, Rhode Island, and Charlotte, North Carolina.[134] Having to share affiliation in some markets, ABC continued to encounter problems clearing programs in two-station markets where affiliation was shared with one of the Big Two. This was especially true for ABC News productions. Most sponsors, promoting mass merchandise, wanted to reach the largest audience possible. ABC could not offer as many television homes as Columbia or NBC. Most advertisers ignored Treyz's argument about the demographic desirability of the audience for ABC programs. The network's national ad rates, Martin Mayer reported in late 1961, ran seven thousand dollars an hour below what NBC and CBS charged, a significant discount at the time.[135]

ABC tried to overcome such disadvantages by appealing to affiliate greed. ABC programs, the network announced early in 1961, would be cut ten seconds so stations could carry on-air promotion or commercials. The Big Two complained and then promptly followed suit. The advantage was lost. And viewers had to suffer more commercials. Close observers blamed the third network. ABC, a Brooklyn viewer contended, "has done more than any other organization to lower the standards of TV." Writing the FCC, he decried the "dangerous, venile [*sic*] and unwise plan of ABC to increase network station break time."[136]

Treyz and others insisted that ABC would become a better citizen if the commission corrected the competitive imbalances fostered by the Sixth Report and Order. Admitting a lag in news programming, Goldenson and others, *TV Guide* reported in August 1959, "insist, however, that their first job is to give viewers the ABC habit—to build a mass audience. Once that is accomplished, they say, it will be possible to expand into more public-service programming."[137] This was an odd argument to make to federal overseers. They were accustomed to demonstrations—not promises—of good citizenship.

Late in the game, ABC tried to compensate for past omissions. Soon after Pastore's admonition, Goldenson moved to enhance ABC's public affairs image. He hired James Hagerty, the departing press secretary for President Eisenhower, as vice president in charge of news. The network began publicizing more systematically, along the lines of CBS, its public affairs programming. Treyz sent letters to members of Congress extolling *Close-Up!*[138] Many critics hailed the Churchill program. *The Valiant Years*, wrote Gilbert Seldes, "is one of the few programs that does honor to television."[139]

Viewers were less impressed. The late November 1960 premiere of *The Valiant Years* earned a 9.3 rating, compared to 21.9 for CBS's *What's My Line?* and 17.7 for NBC's *This Is Your Life*. By comparison, *CBS Report*'s "Harvest of Shame," about the poor treatment of migrant workers, could claim a 15.9 rating for the first half hour, and a 17.1 rating the second thirty minutes.[140] The ratings for *Close-Up!* were not much better. A documentary on the new Kennedy administration had a Nielsen rating of 7; two months later, a special on obesity netted an 8.1 rating.[141]

At a moment when ABC should have stressed its reformed ways, its willingness to bear the burden of public service programming, network officials blew it. Rather than model themselves after the pious Stanton or even Kintner of NBC, who constantly impressed upon critics

his intense dedication to TV news, Goldenson and Treyz veered off message. On several occasions, both executives defined a "balanced" schedule in terms of what *all three networks presented.* "Through our policy of counter-programming," Goldenson told the FCC in early 1960, "we were able to widen the areas of choice for the public and help to create balance in the totality of three-network service." Treyz echoed the chairman. Successful ABC programs, he claimed, including *Disneyland*, *Cheyenne*, *Maverick*, *The Real McCoys*, and *77 Sunset Strip*, "broadened the viewer's choice and made a notable addition to the balance of TV programs available to the public at the time [they were] telecast." ABC slated them against programs "of more standard and orthodox appeal." "Balance" came on Sunday nights when *Maverick* was slated against Ed Sullivan's and Steve Allen's variety hours. Both men acknowledged ABC's expanded news programming, but almost as an aside.[142] If the schedule had become less diverse—that is, overpopulated by cowboys, detectives, and comical fathers—the fault resided with NBC and Columbia, Treyz told a Cincinnati audience in April 1961. The problem, he declared, was CBS and NBC imitating ABC. An infuriated Gould deemed Treyz's assertion "probably the soundest reason yet heard for the direct governmental licensing of networks." ABC had shirked its obligation to air minority interest programming. Treyz in effect argued that "ABC agrees that it is best equipped to take care of 'The Untouchables,' then it is up to CBS to provide Shakespeare and NBC the opera. Love that balance."[143]

Treyz continued to declare that ABC achieved a "balanced" schedule by offering a mix of situation comedies and action dramas. Challenged on that claim, Treyz replied, "It is impossible, I think, for any one network to be all things to all people," adding, "a balanced schedule to one viewer may not be a balanced schedule to another viewer."[144] If Treyz had a dim regard for public relations, so did many others on West Sixty-sixth Street. A year after Treyz's ouster in early 1962, the ABC annual report defined diversity in terms of the range of *entertainment* programs it offered: the wartime drama *Combat!* and the situation comedy *McHale's Navy.*[145]

Growing concerns about violence on television took a special toll on ABC. Because the network continued to schedule so many action dramas, ABC had to reckon with those opinion leaders angry about violent programming's possible effects on children. Treyz's inability to justify an especially violent episode of one ABC series, *Bus Stop*, which at least fifteen affiliates refused to clear, prompted Goldenson to fire

him. Among other gestures to the guardians, Treyz's successor, Thomas Moore, brought back *The Voice of Firestone*.[146]

ABC's programming luck had run out. Its action-adventure hits began to lose their legs. None enjoyed the seemingly interminable life expectancy of Columbia's *Gunsmoke*. With such exceptions, audience enthusiasm for Westerns and detective dramas faded. This placed a special burden on ABC, which had difficulty developing many popular situation comedies compared to CBS. One CBS sitcom, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, became an immense hit beginning with the fall 1962 season. At the same time, ABC permitted its relations with Disney to deteriorate beyond repair. The creator of the Magic Kingdom ended his association with AB-UP. Disney's flagship program, renamed *Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color*, became one of NBC's few reliable hits of the early 1960s.[147]

The FCC had tried to come to the network's aid, even revisiting the ever touchy matter of deintermixture. Both Bakersfield and Fresno lost their VHF channels, rendering them all-UHF. The commission added third VHF channels in Syracuse, Grand Rapids, Rochester, Providence, and Oklahoma City. But ABC wanted more.[148]

The FCC did act to save UHF—and by extension ABC. After prolonged negotiation, Chairman Newton N. Minow won passage of the All-Channel Television Set Act in 1962, which empowered the commission to mandate that all TV sets have UHF tuners. (Minow was much more concerned about saving educational television, which relied far more than ABC on UHF for stations.) At the same time, though the FCC created a third VHF for ABC in Rochester, the commission refused to deintermix eight other markets where ABC had sought relief. Having lobbied for the bill, Goldenson felt Minow had betrayed him. But the chairman had to respect the opposition of some in Congress and on the commission itself.[149] At the least, the all-channel act assured the diffusion of UHF. But ABC had to wait until the 1970s for its affiliation weaknesses to be overcome. Being excluded from eighteen of the top one hundred markets in the late 1960s caused a 3 percent gap in coverage that, *Fortune* reported, reduced ABC's potential revenues by 25 percent.[150]

Still Third

In the decade following the AB-UP merger, the third network survived but remained firmly in third place. Its fate rested partly with the

FCC, partly with an underfinanced merger partner, and partly with a strategy that was aggressive regarding show business and marketing considerations but shortsighted concerning its public image. All told, ABC hardly offered the benefits to the public interest that the commission had hoped for. Or that Goldenson claimed. "As I predicted at the [1952] FCC hearings," Goldenson recalled, "competition from a viable third network spurred the entire industry to greater efforts."[151]

The "greater efforts," at least in the 1950s and 1960s, are not easily located. Rather than increasing the diversity of programming, ABC's rise caused a narrowing of what viewers were offered. Both NBC and CBS partially abandoned cultural missionary work in favor of imitating the upstart. A young economist, Peter O. Steiner, had suggested this outcome in a 1952 *Quarterly Journal of Economics* article. Intensifying competition among the radio networks had increased the probability that rival chains would imitate each other's more successful programs.[152] Steiner's essay in all likelihood went unread in Washington. Nevertheless, some others saw the future. In 1956, the *Nation*'s glum TV columnist forecast that "there is no doubt that in a few years there will be little if any difference between the networks."[153] The principal agent of this standardization, Leonard Goldenson, could be credited for keeping his enterprise on the air. But for little else. Revealingly, Goldenson was the last of the 1950s television executives to receive the National Association of Broadcasters' Distinguished Service Award. "It was difficult," the industry reporter Les Brown observed, "to find reason to cite him for industry statesmanship."[154]

11 Signing Off

Robert E. Kintner, president of NBC, made the cover of *Time* magazine on November 16, 1959. Most prominent men and women with any vanity in the 1950s coveted a *Time* cover story. It was normally flattering. But Kintner had made the cover for all the wrong reasons. And although the biographical summary that accompanied the cover story of the network executive and former journalist, was generally admiring, the NBC president had his hands full. NBC and Columbia were struggling with the worst public relations fiasco in broadcast history.[1]

Kintner, like most journalists of his generation, was intensely cynical. He possessed few of his predecessor's ambitions for the newest medium. Pat Weaver had cast himself as a cultural missionary, determined to make television an enlightenment machine. Kintner's intentions were more modest. Unlike Weaver, he was deeply committed to enhancing NBC News. Despite that emphasis, he toyed in 1958 with canceling *The Today Show* or reducing its length to one hour a day.[2] He ordered *Home*, another Weaver creation, off the air in August 1957. As NBC introduced daytime quiz programs, more and more of its daytime schedule came to resemble Columbia's. He replaced Weaver's ambitious daytime anthology, *Matinee Theatre*, in 1958 with two soap operas.[3] Kintner surrendered to sponsors and independent producers the initiative in creating and producing programs. He gave enormous latitude to MCA, a Hollywood-based talent agency that had begun program production, despite a reputation for fashioning lackluster series. He really did not care. "The theory of NBC," he remarked, "is basically to create what we call a schedule of meat-and-potatoes."[4]

One market-driven approach to scheduling caused great heartache. In October and November 1959, the House Commerce Committee held hearings on the big-money quiz shows. Both CBS and NBC several seasons earlier had profited from the success of such programs, notably

The $64,000 Question (CBS) and *Twenty-One* (NBC). The committee in effect publicized allegations that had been made by a few journalists and were being pursued by the New York district attorney. The quiz programs, committee testimony established, had been rigged. Highly stylized duels between contestants had in fact been predetermined by producers and sponsors for dramatic effect. They had given the answers to some favored contestants in advance and persuaded others to give incorrect responses. The most newsworthy revelation was the most unbelievable. Among those participating in the video deception by agreeing to be coached was Charles Van Doren, who had several weeks of success on *Twenty-One*. Van Doren, an English instructor at Columbia University, was a member of a prominent literary family. He was handsome, charming. So much so that NBC had signed him to a contract; he regularly appeared on *The Today Show*. He remained on the program as he prepared to confess to his part in the fix—after initially denying any wrongdoing. Wrote Marie Torre of the *New York Herald Tribune*, "Van Doren's confession triggered, not surprisingly, an explosive uproar, and the shrapnel rained on the medium that had coached Van Doren in the art of deception."[5]

Much public hand-wringing ensued. Van Doren's fall was the stuff of tragedy, and symbolic, in the minds of many guardians, of television's capacity to corrupt. Illinois Democratic senator Paul H. Douglas wrote of "the grave charges of complicity hanging over a man who has had every opportunity to represent the finest intellectual tradition in Western Civilization."[6] President Eisenhower, who probably watched more television than most members of the nation's political elite, compared Van Doren to Shoeless Joe Jackson, one of those charged with fixing the 1919 World Series. Privately, Eisenhower ordered his press secretary to convey his unhappiness to CBS's White House correspondent, which the reporter dutifully passed on to New York.[7] The revelations came as many American leaders fretted about the country's resolve to win the Cold War. Images of bread and circuses abounded. The scandals, FCC commissioner Robert E. Lee declared, reflected "the Godless materialism which is the cancer of American life."[8]

The vast majority of the viewing public, however, manifested little concern over the quiz show revelations. The programs had never been as popular nationally as in New York, and their national ratings had been in free fall for several seasons. Although widely covered—92 percent of Americans polled by Gallup had read or heard about the proceed-

ings—the hearings prompted relatively few constituents to complain to their members of Congress. Far more wrote to protest the prospect of pay TV or hard alcohol advertising. The news media could not, pollsters found, tell Americans what to think about; relatively few discussed the matter with their families and friends. Then, too, the public may not have been as naive as their guardians assumed. Surveys failed to record any mass furor. College and high school students proved unruffled by the scandal; they were far more inclined to moral relativism than political and cultural leaders a generation older.[9] "Was America really deceived?" the veteran journalist Russell Baker asked years later. "Of course not, except for the usual saps (there's one born every minute, Barnum noted) who always want to be deceived."[10]

Nevertheless, CBS and NBC realized that they had to contend with a "second" public, that minority of viewers and public officials, starting with President Eisenhower, who expected them to clean house. No one spoke of severe retribution; there were no worst-case scenarios. But the quiz revelations prompted the nation's most prominent newspaper columnist, Walter Lippmann, normally preoccupied with U.S. foreign policy, to recommend an American BBC, a cause supported, until then, primarily by land-grant university speech professors and parent-teacher associations. "No other civilized country," he wrote, had a television system "run on the principle that the choice of programs shall be determined by selling them to advertisers."[11]

To still such voices, and preserve the American system of broadcasting, Columbia and NBC carefully shifted responsibility without shirking it altogether. Reading from the same script, they insisted that they too had been misled. They had trusted the producers—and had been deceived. No more. Both networks reasserted their obligation to oversee everything they telecast. They, and not some cosmetics company, were legally responsible for any misrepresentations on the air. It was a clever response. TV's detractors were even more unhappy with Madison Avenue than the networks.[12]

In addition, both networks offered programming concessions. Already smarting from reactions to the cancellation of *See It Now* in mid–1958, CBS had committed itself to a new documentary series, *CBS Reports*, some six months before the quiz show hearings. More news and cultural programming initiatives were announced in late 1959.[13]

FCC chairman John C. Doerfer tried to cement the networks' renewed dedication to minority interest programming. In January 1960,

he met with the heads of all three networks. With an antitrust waiver from the Justice Department, Doerfer persuaded each network to agree to schedule one hour of news or cultural programming each week in evening prime time beginning after the November 1960 election. Doerfer's intervention was remarkable. He was the most stubbornly free market–oriented member of the commission. His involvement offered one more sign of how much the quiz show excesses had upset some in Washington. At the same time, Doerfer believed the deal would becalm the guardians. As one trade journal reported, "the network agreement will help unload a big burden from the shoulders of Congress, the Commission and the networks, all of whom have been caught up in the swirl of public clamor over the rigged quiz, payola and deceptive advertising issues."[14]

Doerfer's daring plan was never implemented. A month after the deal had been struck, Doerfer resigned. For the second time in two years, the chairman had been compromised by a conflict of interest. On a Florida vacation in February, Doerfer had spent six days on the yacht of George Storer, whose company owned thirteen radio and television stations. During 1958 House Commerce Committee hearings, Doerfer had been warned to limit his contacts with parties subject to commission regulation. But Doerfer could not resist Storer's hospitality. He again found himself having to endure criticism before a wholly unsympathetic House Commerce Committee. Several days later, President Eisenhower personally demanded Doerfer's resignation. With the deal maker gone (he subsequently took a job with Storer Broadcasting), so was the Doerfer plan.[15]

Despite Doerfer's departure, all three networks boosted their news programming in 1960, mainly to cover the presidential campaign. In one more bone tossed to the chattering classes, the networks agreed to telecast four one-hour debates between the major party candidates for president. "The great debates" netted generally positive reviews. And, a year after the quiz show hearings, the networks had every reason to assume they had satisfied their critics.

Nevertheless, pressure to boost news programming did not ebb. In a speech to the National Association of Broadcasters in May 1961, a new FCC chairman, Newton N. Minow, called television "a vast wasteland." Extensively covered, Minow's remarks inspired many approving letters to the commission. The networks again found themselves on the defensive. Although Minow had trouble securing enough votes on

the commission to achieve very much, he was able, to the delight of Kintner and others, to encourage the expansion of the CBS and NBC nightly newscasts in September 1963. ABC followed four years later. Affiliates had been reluctant to surrender the additional fifteen minutes. Minow and others in Washington not too quietly urged them to do so. The added quarter hour made the CBS and NBC evening newscast hugely profitable. Advertiser interest in newscasts rose such that by 1969, *The Huntley Brinkley Report* produced more revenue for NBC than any other program. Stations similarly found newscasts increasingly attractive. Only the documentary remained a money-loser and was eventually abandoned.[16]

By the early 1960s, television's "rules" had been perfected. No longer did broadcasters feel obligated to air programming live. Audiences had demonstrated no particular preference for live over recorded fare; if anything, they normally chose the latter. Fewer insisted, as Weaver had, that a live performance held an intrinsic advantage over a recorded one. "Artistically," *Variety* observed in March 1962, "the belief is now general in TV that anything that live can do, film can do better." And videotape allowed the stars of variety shows to *appear* live, yet avoid the risks of flubbed lines or costuming accidents. In mid–1964, 26.4 percent of all network originations were live, compared with 36.8 percent filmed and 36.8 percent videotaped.[17] Nevertheless, older practices persisted, as each network committed itself to regular series that, with a few well-publicized exceptions, sought the largest possible audiences. As the total demand for television time grew in the 1960s the opportunity cost proved too great to act otherwise. Television reached too many homes to be ignored by the vast majority of mass advertisers. Weaver was fond of telling interviewers that sponsors of prestige programs he favored had abandoned television.[18] But their departure otherwise went unnoticed. Many others filled the network coffers.

Advertisers looked to expand their promotional opportunities. They began demanding that stations and networks reduce hours dedicated to children's programs during the day in favor of talk or local news shows that would attract adults. In 1994, Chicago's WGN dropped *The Bozo Show* from its morning slot; WGN had telecast the program for thirty-four years. The Bozo the clown character had once been franchised for use by different performers at 183 stations. Only 3 remained on the air the year WGN moved its clown to Sundays. WGN canceled the weekly program seven years later.[19]

At the same time, TV proved so attractive that advertisers surrendered their power over individual programs. The long-time broadcast practice in which sponsors underwrote entire programs all but ended. The costs of production proved too steep for single advertisers; some simply found the risk of banking on a single show too great. During the 1964–65 season, 13.2 percent of all evening prime-time series had single sponsors; nine seasons earlier, 65 percent had sole sponsors.[20]

Contrary to some expectations, breaking the sponsor's authority had only superficial effects on programs. The close connection between the advertiser and the show disappeared. No longer did a sponsor's product or logo adorn the set. Variety programs did not begin with uniformed gas station attendants singing a company jingle. Yet the advent of multiple sponsorship did not otherwise affect the medium. If anything, it increased the pressure on the networks to maximize audiences. Advertisers were prepared to continue their patronage only if they were assured the largest possible ratings. For still larger audiences, came still more patronage. Although there were exceptions, TV by and large remained a mass medium.[21]

Weaver, for one, had not anticipated this outcome. Like many contemporary critics, Weaver blamed the sponsor for much of what ailed broadcasting. The sponsor was risk averse; the sponsor did not understand the value of public service or experimentation. Once the network assumed sovereignty over the schedule, the medium would gain. But that would only have occurred had *all three networks* been led by men and women like Weaver. And no network, let alone three, would ever let Weaver or a disciple back into the tent. Weaver did not anticipate that the attributes he so knowingly associated with advertisers would simply be taken up by the networks themselves.

The networks' imperative to earn even more money caused the fall of a scheduling "enclave" for public service programs. The Sunday afternoon ghetto had traditionally been set aside for the minority of viewers interested in news and culture. Some of the programming, notably NBC's *Victory at Sea* and some Hallmark Hall of Fame productions, had been memorable. Olivier's filmed adaptation of *Richard III* had been telecast on a Sunday afternoon. Audiences were usually modest. Relatively few viewers, it was assumed, watched TV on Sunday afternoons. Yet the networks eventually realized that Sabbath audiences would rise if they changed the programming mix. The Sunday ghetto gradually disappeared.

The main instrument of the ghetto's demolition was professional football. Although the National Football League had existed since the 1920s, most sports fans preferred baseball and college football. Indeed, the NFL scheduled its games on Sunday afternoons so as not to compete against college football. Several networks aired NFL games in the 1950s, but they only slowly developed a video following. The exciting overtime game between the New York Giants and Baltimore Colts deciding the 1958 league title, many believed, helped popularize the telecasts. Yet the game itself was the larger factor. Football was relatively easy to capture on television, compared to other sports, such as baseball or, especially, hockey. The games were also played in the fall when the weather began turning unpleasant in the northern half of the country. Gradually, NFL telecasts, aired on CBS, developed a following. So much so that in 1960 a new rival, the American Football League, quickly secured an ABC contract. Although the league struggled, like so much ABC programming, in its first years, NBC saved the day for the AFL with a generous five-year deal in January 1964.[22]

Proof of the AFL's growing audiences came in November 1968, when NBC failed to carry the wild conclusion of the New York Jets–Oakland Raiders game, which the Raiders won by scoring two touchdowns in the final sixty-five seconds. Assuming the Jets would prevail, the network switched, as previously scheduled, to a lavishly mounted filmed adaptation of the children's story *Heidi*. *Heidi*'s director had also directed *Marty*. Thousands could not have cared less. They immediately telephoned their objections to the network, causing the NBC switchboard to break down. Some, unable to get through, phoned the New York Police Department. New York fans, a Dallas sportswriter smirked, "figure Heidi must have been playing safety in the Jets' Prevent Defense in that terrible last minute against Oakland." "The Oakland rally in that final minute," wrote *New York Times* sports columnist Arthur Daley, "provided a climax that may have hit with more impact than any production that NBC ever offered." An apologetic NBC immediately promised never again to cut away from a game for regularly scheduled programming.[23]

Not every sporting event commanded substantial space on the weekend schedule because of popular appeal. Golf tournaments began populating the schedule although their audiences were comparatively modest and golf tourneys had a poor CPM. But some advertisers (and network executives) loved golf. So, too, it should be noted, did such

opinion leaders as John F. Kennedy. All in all, golf matches drew a better "demographic," that is, a wealthier class of viewers more appealing to advertisers. And the televising of golf offered one of the first indications that the demographic composition of viewers might determine what was scheduled. In the mid–1970s, nearly three times as many Americans bowled as played golf, and more Americans watched bowling on TV than golf. Yet the latter sport netted three times as much TV time.[24]

Sports, Weaver plotted, might allow his return to television. In the early 1960s, the former NBC executive sat in a midtown Manhattan office, underemployed by a major advertising agency. His programming philosophy had no takers until 1963 when investors lured him to California to run a pay television system. Subscription Television (STV), a precursor to cable television, offered pay channels. Perhaps the key attraction would be telecasts of the Los Angeles Dodgers and San Francisco Giants baseball teams. In addition, subscribers could view recent feature films and cultural events. But STV failed after California voters supported a November 1964 referendum that outlawed the "pay" system. The referendum forced STV's liquidation and left Weaver once again in the wilderness.[25]

The FCC stifled another alternative to the network oligopoly. Community antenna or cable systems, originally devised in the late 1940s to improve reception in mountainous areas, provided subscribers a wider selection of channels. The commission worried, however, that cable's diffusion would come at the expense of local stations, especially struggling UHF channels. The FCC proceeded to pass rules that limited cable to smaller, less profitable markets.[26]

Almost as slowly, America acquired a public broadcasting system. Educational groups had found the establishment and sustaining of stations expensive propositions. Their pedantic approach to programming failed to endear them to viewers, even better-educated ones. Rather than an evening comparable to watching the BBC, the typical ETV schedule possessed all the verve of a marathon PTA meeting. In the mid–1960s, however, a small group of opinion leaders, in and out of government, conspired to take over educational television. Critics of commercial television came to believe it constituted the only alternative to the rule-bound networks and stations. Although President Johnson himself evinced scant interest in the matter, a key aide persuaded him to support the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. Educational television

became public television. Instead of self-consciously instructional, the new system became self-consciously cultural. And PBS could not normally compete with the Big Three. Congress refused to provide PBS with adequate funding; stations held innumerable telethons while wooing corporate benefactors. A dependence on viewer donations—and elderly volunteers—encouraged some PBS channels to telecast reruns of *Lawrence Welk*.[27]

While PBS struggled, network television rules, which so exasperated critics, slowly changed in ways that offered detractors some relief. NBC initiated the move in the late 1960s. Stuck in second place, the network began to persuade some advertisers that NBC series appealed to younger viewers more likely to try advertised products. This was a pitch ABC had made less successfully a decade earlier. Growing agency sophistication in establishing the demographic composition (and consumer practices) of audiences had improved since then. Columbia's viewers, NBC insisted, were too old and likely to live in small towns. Simply put, they did not consume as much, and when they did, they bought brands they had always purchased. Not to be outflanked, CBS in 1971 canceled three popular situation comedies—*The Beverly Hillbillies*, *Green Acres*, and *Mayberry, RFD*—despite substantial if graying, small-town audiences. Columbia even ended Ed Sullivan's long-running variety hour. Similar considerations caused ABC to drop *Lawrence Welk*. New, more daring or, in '70s parlance, "relevant," situation comedies, led by the popular *All in the Family*, began filling the schedule. The 1971–72 season, wrote Les Brown, "was designed for a citified audience."[28]

A decade later came another change in the business of broadcasting. A growing body of evidence suggested that many well-intentioned business regulations could have unintended, negative consequences. Critics had initially focused on inefficiencies caused by airline and truck regulations. Some turned their attention to communication oversight. The FCC's handling of cable was a case in point. The commission had attempted to protect local stations and UHF channels; its regulations, however, had delayed cable's diffusion and denied most Americans more choices in programs. A new consensus emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Less regulation better served consumers. In time, "less" became "virtually no" regulation. And the FCC gradually freed broadcasters of decades-long expectations that they air minority interest programming. Television stations continued to produce news

programs, but only those productions—mainly newscasts and "magazine" shows like *60 Minutes*—that generated solid ratings and advertiser patronage.[29]

Meanwhile, cable systems became available in many more American communities. Viewers who once had to settle for three or four local stations, could, by subscribing to a cable service, choose from a dozen, then two dozen, then literally dozens and dozens of channels. By the end of the century, the networks had lost roughly half of the TV audience.[30]

Many of cable's most-watched programs were the not-too-distant relations to what the networks and stations had long offered. Older feature films that had once been late-night filler formed the basis of several classic motion picture channels. Wrestling matches drew fans whose grandparents just might recall Gorgeous George. Children's programs, dropped in the 1960s in favor of newscasts and celebrity interview programs, found new homes on Nickelodeon and other cable channels. And popular network series never died: they lived on numerous cable networks. None more than *I Love Lucy*, as well as the rural sitcoms that CBS had deemed too provincial for the great audience. Boasted Nickelodeon in a 1988 promotion, "Our reruns are better than theirs."[31]

Cable briefly and teasingly promised a cultural redemption. Surely, some mused, one or more artistic channels would offer subscribers the cultural programming once produced by NBC and CBS in the 1950s. The *Boston Globe* spoke of those "who were banking on cable to fill the yawning void left by commercial television." Paley himself imagined that the cable market would support such an outlet. He was proven wrong. CBS Cable's expensive array of original programming impressed more critics than advertisers, and drew few viewers. It expired in late 1982 after a fourteen-month existence, costing the network $60 million. Paley was devastated. "It was one of our most hurtful failures," he remarked.[32] The Entertainment Channel, at first available to cable subscribers for an extra fee, resembled CBS Cable in its emphasis on live performance. But with remarkable chutzpah, the channel filled some of its schedule with failed television series. "Cable's need for material is clearly becoming desperate," wrote a *New York Times* critic, "when past network failures are offered to the viewer at a greater expense than they were available for in the first place." The Entertainment Channel ceased charging subscribers and merged with ABC's Arts Channel. The new A&E network was far more cost conscious, and proved profitable after contain-

ing any lingering cultural pretensions. A&E balanced more ambitious original and British-made series with reruns of middling network dramas and celebrity profiles. A disappointed business writer wrote in the late 1980s of "cable's quintessential fifth-ratedness."[33]

Still, the cable audience grew, compelling the networks to recast their relations with sponsors in the 1990s. Once cable's effects on ratings became plain, NBC and ABC crafted a new pitch to advertisers. Because of cable and other competition, total audiences for a sitcom like *Seinfeld* might be smaller, in relative terms, than those for a comparable 1970s show, but the witty program drew younger, more well-to-do consumers. Such viewers were not likely to be watching so many cable channels. The networks persuaded sponsors in effect to pay more for reaching fewer viewers. What Bill Carter of the *New York Times* dubbed "the failure model" proved persuasive enough to maintain and increase the networks' profits even as fewer Americans viewed their programs. It also represented the abandonment of a seventy-year broadcasting "rule" that prized large audiences above all others. Such calculations profited two new networks, Fox and WB, both of which had programs attractive to younger viewers—the most coveted members of the consumer republic. In 2003,WB charged advertisers more for a thirty-second spot on *Smallville* than CBS assessed for a thirty-second ad on *60 Minutes.* The latter program had nearly twice the audience. Yet viewers of *60 Minutes* had a median age of about sixty, compared with twenty-nine for *Smallville.*[34]

Cable altered other broadcast television rules. Cable channels for children relieved stations and networks of past obligations to produce programming for the young. Cable news outlets became an excuse for network executives wanting to reduce their special coverage. The national party conventions, which once consumed hours of each network's schedule, were limited to one hour an evening. In 2004, ABC bumped two nights of convention reportage to telecast *exhibition* NFL games. Those wanting to see more of the conventions had to turn to a cable channel. "Cable is the political conduit of the air," remarked Andrew Kohut of the Pew Research Center in 2000. "If you don't have that cable coming into your house, you're getting a whole heck of a lot less information about politics."[35]

Cable encouraged modifications of rules about moral standards. Pay cable in particular allowed nudity and the use of obscenity forbidden by federal overseers. The creator of Home Box Office's series *Deadwood*

(2004), wrote one critic, "uses F-words because he can."[36] But even some regular cable outlets like Comedy Central and MTV, because they reached largely young audiences, considered themselves free to ignore some long-held standards. Not surprisingly, the networks and producers of syndicated material, notably certain talk shows, deferred less to older proprieties.[37]

Nonetheless, cable only partly accounted for broadcast television's looser morality. Since the late 1960s, some TV producers and performers, inspired by Hollywood's new freedoms and legal relaxation of obscenity standards, had fought for a more realistic treatment of sexuality. Much of the audience, especially many baby boomers, began to reject the older moral strictures as absurd. Distinctions between public and private morality appeared hypocritical. Why should married characters in a sitcom be shown sleeping in separate twin beds? Television slowly began to treat human relations more realistically, then, in some instances, even crudely.[38]

Competitive pressures sometimes forced the issue. In 1993, ABC allowed Steven Bochco's police drama *NYPD Blue* to use a wide range of vulgarities and even show women's breasts (from the side). Many affiliates refused to carry the first episode. But the network was frantic; it had fallen to third place in the ratings. ABC executives, Bochco remarked, "allowed us latitude because they were getting killed in the ratings. It wasn't an artistic decision; it was an economic decision."[39] Such considerations, in turn, liberated producers who lacked Bochco's aspirations to realism. Most only aspired to better ratings. "Authentic creativity can't compete as desperate managers dive to the culture's lowest common denominator of what sells," cried a *Wall Street Journal* columnist. "The dumbing down of America has been followed by the scuzzing down of America."[40]

Because televisions could be found in virtually every American home, however, efforts to popularize the new morality did not go uncontested. By the late twentieth century, most of those working in the entertainment industry had come to regard self-restraint as unhealthy. In opposition stood a large minority of Americans, many of them deeply religious. They took exception to what they regarded as the medium's occasional moral laxity. They were upset during the 2004 Super Bowl Halftime Show on CBS when, during a duet, Justin Timberlake exposed one of Janet Jackson's breasts (it was described as a wardrobe malfunction). The program itself, which included a few other challenges to

public taste, had been produced by MTV, a cable channel. The network cultivated adolescents and their younger siblings; although very profitable, it had an average audience in 2003 one-tenth that of CBS. MTV did not program for morally upright parents or grandparents. MTV, the *New York Daily News* observed sourly, "makes a considerable buck peddling booty-shaking and trash-talking to teenagers." The FCC reported receiving just under two hundred thousand complaints.[41]

Although the protesters caused some momentary discomfort at CBS and the NFL, they could not turn back the clock. Poor Jackson was the new millennium's Charles Van Doren: the inspiration for sermons to which few listened. Many more accepted the new morality. "Entertainment built on violence and sex," Frank Rich of the *New York Times* contended, "isn't going away as long as Americans lap it up." Jackson, unlike Mae West several generations earlier, suffered no boycott from broadcasters; she subsequently appeared on ABC and NBC shows.[42] Although she and other performers pledged to be more careful about their costuming, the twin beds remained in the attic. Other things could be found in storage as well: aspirations and dreams that Weaver and others shared for television, and the conviction that the television audience would be different.

NOTES

Abbreviations

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
CART	Continuity Acceptance Reports—Television
DGA	Directors Guild of America
FCC	U.S. Federal Communications Commission
GSA	General Services Administration
JWT	J. Walter Thompson
LC	Library of Congress
NA	National Archives
NYPL	New York Public Library
ONS	Office of Network Study, FCC
SEP	*Saturday Evening Post*
WHS	Wisconsin Historical Society

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Chapter 3. The Marionette and the Cross-Dresser

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16. Some of the earliest programming efforts by NBC and other stations are recounted in Joseph H. Udelson, *The Great Television Race: A History of the American Television Industry* (University: University of Alabama Press, 1982), 133–41.

17. McCraw, *American Business*, 116; Alfred R. Oxenfeldt, *Marketing Practices in the TV Set Industry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 10.

18. Slotten, *Radio and Television Regulation*, chap. 3; Mickie Edwardson, "James Lawrence Fly v. David Sarnoff: Blitzkrieg over Television," *Journalism History* 25 (Summer 1999): 42–52; Udelson, *Great Television Race*, 141–56; Alva Johnston, "Television: Boom or Bubble?" *SEP*, 9 Mar. 1946, 135.

19. Edwardson, "James Lawrence Fly v. David Sarnoff," 43. A *Fortune* magazine writer a year earlier had estimated that in addition to license fees, RCA would earn about 3.5 percent of the wholesale price on each receiver sold domestically. "Television I," 172.

20. Bilby, *The General*, 129; Dreher, *Sarnoff*, 135–38; Graham, *RCA*, 40–41; Abramson, *Zworykin*, 166. Philco's particular grievance against RCA is recounted in Udelson, *Great Television Race*, 120.

21. Allen B. Du Mont, "Television Now and Tomorrow," *Journal of Marketing* 9 (Jan. 1943): 278; Warren R. Williams, "Sarnoff Predicts Television Boom," *New York Times*, 16 June 1945; Alva Johnston, "Television: Boom or Bubble?" *SEP*, 16 Mar. 1946, 94.

22. "Case Report on RCA Victor Television Sets," [ca. late 1948], Account Files, box 16, Thompson Papers.

23. Alva Johnston, "Television: Boom or Bubble?" *SEP*, 9 Mar. 1946, 134; Herald Beckjorden to Thomas D. Brophy, 9 Apr. 1946, Brophy Papers, box 8; *Television Rates and Factbook* (1 Oct. 1949), 85.

24. "R.C.A.'s Television," 81; David Weinstein, *The Forgotten Network: DuMont and the Birth of American Television* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), chap. 2; Oxenfeldt, *Marketing Practices*, 11–13.

25. Sally Bedell Smith, *In All His Glory: The Life of William S. Paley* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 268–69.

26. "R.C.A.'s Television," 81.

27. Boddy, "Launching Television," 50–51, 53. Zenith also participated in the CBS offensive, which involved reallocating TV channels on the ultra high frequency. This would have rendered RCA receivers obsolete. See "Battle of TV Sets," *Business Week*, 26 Mar. 1949, 84, 86.

28. Robert E. Kintner, "Summary of Department Heads Meeting," 16 Nov. 1948, copy in Hinckley Papers, box 84; memo, C. N. Priaulx to all department heads, 8 Apr. 1948, ibid., box 87; Weinstein, *Forgotten Network*, 16–17; "Commercial Television," *Life*, 27 May 1946, 83.

29. "Television I," 172.

30. Robert Conly, "The Promise of Television," *American Mercury* 59 (July 1944), 61.

31. McCraw, *American Business*, 126.

32. Gary Newton Hess, "An Historical Study of the Du Mont Television Network" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1960), 58–59.

33. Allen B. Du Mont, "Television Now and Tomorrow," *Journal of Marketing* 3 (Jan. 1943): 277.

34. Alva Johnston, "Television: Boom or Bubble?" *SEP*, 16 Mar. 1946, 23; E. F. McDonald Jr., letter to shareholders, 29 Oct. 1939, copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 102; McDonald obituary, *Broadcasting*, 19 May 1958, 93–94; Edgar M. Jones, "How about Television?" *Nation*, 6 Apr. 1940, 447.

35. Alva Johnston, "Television: Boom or Bubble?" *SEP*, 9 Mar. 1946, 132, and 23 Mar. 1946, 20.

36. John Western, "Television Girds for Battle," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 3 (Oct. 1939): 547, 549.

37. L. W. Herzog, "Milwaukee Keeps Busy Learning about 'Tele,'" *Editor and Publisher*, 24 Nov. 1945, 54. See also Jack Gould, "Television: Boon or Bane?" *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 10 (Fall 1946): 317, and "Stations Need Big Staffs, Expensive Equipment," *Minneapolis Star*, 26 Apr. 1948.

38. Walter J. Damm, "Statement of the Journal Company," n.d., copy in Senate TV Inquiry records, box 704. See also John Gardiner, "The Rich Rewards of Pioneering," *Television Magazine* (Mar. 1968): 27.

39. Ben Gross, *I Looked and I Listened; Informal Recollections of Radio and TV* (New York: Random House, 1954), 280–81.

40. David Weinstein, "Du Mont in Washington, D.C.: Out on a Limb," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 16 (1999): 378; "Television! Boom!" *Fortune*, May 1948, 79.

41. O. B. Hanson to W. R. G. Baker, 31 May 1935; memo, Don E. Gilman to Lenox R. Lohr, 20 July 1939, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 99. Others thought that film would only be important to fill schedules for stations prior to their connection to the network. See memo, E. A. Hungerford Jr. to N. E. Kersta, 25 Aug. 1939, ibid.

42. Dreher, *Sarnoff*, 202.

43. "Pix Biz Chilly on Tele," *Variety*, 14 July 1937, 15.

44. Ibid., 1, 15; Western, "Television Girds for Battle," 558–59.

45. Paramount's 1938 investment in Du Mont was an unenthusiastic, precautionary step, taken as insurance in case the TV boom ever came. Despite Paramount's indifference, the FCC considered the film company's stake in Du Mont in spurning the latter's frantic effort to secure two more stations. Du Mont had only three owned and operated stations in 1952. The additional stations might have sustained Du Mont. See David Weinstein, *Forgotten Network*, 12–13, 24–25, 31–35; Hess, "Historical Study," 52–53, 116–19. On Paramount's Los Angeles station, see Mark Williams, "Paramount's KTLA: The Leading Station in Early Los Angeles Television," in *Television in America: Local Station History from across the Nation*, ed. Michael Murray and Donald Godfrey, 322–37 (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1997).

46. Memo, Mark Woods to E. J. Noble, 14 Apr. 1948, Hinckley Papers, box 85; Aline Mosby, "Pioneer Once Thought Mad," *Los Angeles Herald and Examiner*, 4 June 1953, "Hal Roach Studio" file, Hearst Collection.

47. My characterization of the film audience owes much to Paul F. Lazarsfeld's case study "Audience Research in the Movie Field," *Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science*, 254 (Nov. 1947), 162–63. See also John Houseman, "Hollywood Faces the Fifties," *Harper's*, Apr. 1950, 53; memo, Thomas Coffin to H. M. Beville Jr., 15 Dec. 1949, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 342; Jerome Ellison, "Baby Sitting's Big Business Now," *Saturday Evening Post*, 20 Nov. 1948, 36. On the economics of starting families immediately after World War II, see Richard A. Easterlin, "The American Baby Boom in Historical Perspective," *American Economic Review* 51 (Dec. 1961): 869–95.

48. "Grim Choice for Hollywood," *Business Week*, 24 June 1950, 26; Hedda Hopper, "Zanuck Tells Hedda How New Blood and Daring Beat Box Office Doldrums," *Los Angeles Times*, 17 Apr. 1949; Gladwin Hill, "Hollywood Is Wary of TV," *New York Times*, 24 Apr. 1949.

49. Cunningham and Walsh, Inc., *Videotown: Annual Census of TV and Its Effects on Family Life in a Typical American City* (New York: Cunningham and Walsh, 1958), 11:7; "Movies: New Sick Industry," *Business Week*, 25 Nov. 1950, 26; Garth Jowett, *Film: The Democratic Art* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976), 343–

44; John Izod, *Hollywood and the Box Office 1895–1986* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 134–35. A survey of 102 New York City set owners in 1948 found that "the most avid movie-goers" were the most likely to reduce their patronage of theaters after purchasing a TV. See Melvin Arthur Goldberg, "Politics and Television" (master's thesis, Columbia University, 1949), 5–6.

50. On this point, see Theodore Levitt, "Marketing Myopia," *Harvard Business Review*, 38 (July-Aug. 1960), 45–46.

51. *JWT News*, 13 Aug. 1951, 3, Thompson Papers.

52. A. H. Weiler, "By Way of Report," *New York Times*, 14 Oct. 1945; Leo Burnett Co., "Report Number Two: Progress of Television . . .," July 1946, copy in NBC Papers, LC, folder 586; memo, R. M. Kinney to Robert H. Hinckley, 1 June 1948, Hinckley Papers, box 84.

53. *New York Times*, 24 Nov. 1948, 2 Dec. 1948, 5 Dec. 1948; *Variety*, 1 Dec. 1948, 2. 20th Century Fox appears to have been the last studio to surrender the idea of entering television directly. As late as July 1948, Fox still had four TV license applications on file with the FCC. Memo, Clure H. Owen to Robert H. Hinckley, 7 July 1948, Hinckley Papers, box 87.

54. Jerry Walker, "News in Television; Newspapers in News," *Editor and Publisher*, 1 May 1948, 48.

55. Memo, E. I. Sponable to Norman Steinberg, 17 June 1947, Sponable Papers, box 68. See Bernard Kreuzer to Sponable, 29 Jan. 1947, ibid.; "Movies: New Sick Industry," *Business Week*, 25 Nov. 1950, 26; Conly, "Promise of Television," 62–63; Douglas Gomery, "Failed Opportunities: The Integration of the U.S. Motion Picture and Television Industries," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 9 (Summer 1984): 220–23.

56. John Evans McCoy and Harry P. Warner, "Theater Television Today," *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers* 53 (Oct. 1949): 321–90; E. Labin, "The Eidophor Method for Theater Television," *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers* 54 (Apr. 1950): 393–406; Izod, *Hollywood*, 135.

57. Leo Burnett Co., "Report Number Two," copy in NBC Papers, LC, folder 586.

58. "Grim Choice for Hollywood," *Business Week*, 24 June 1950, 26; "TV-Movie Policy," ibid., 1 July 1950, 21; Gomery, "Failed Opportunities," 224–26; interview by author with Frederick W. Ford, 19 June 1978.

59. E. F. McDonald Jr. letter to Zenith shareholders, 29 Oct. 1939, in NBC Papers, box 102, WHS; McDonald, "Television: An Economic Riddle," pamphlet originally published in *Des Moines Register Tribune*, 21 Oct. 1941, copy in James Lawrence Fly Papers, box 1; "Phonevision Potential Told for Publishers," *Editor and Publisher*, 26 June 1948, 44; McDonald, "Television Will Cost Big Money," *Collier's*, 29 June 1946, 18–19, 79; Joe Hyams, "Goldwyn Sees Pay-as-You-Go TV as Half of Market for Movies," *New York Herald Tribune*, 6

Nov. 1952, 27; Milton Lehman, "TV's Colossal Hassle," *Saturday Evening Post*, 29 Oct. 1955, 128.

60. See, for example, testimony of Leonard Goldenson of United Paramount Theatres in March 1952, Docket 10031, vol. 9, *Proc.*, 34:5084, 5089–90, FCC Records, NA.

61. Leo A. Handel, *Hollywood Looks at Its Audience; A Report of Film Audience Research* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1950), 97–98. See also *Variety*, 28 Jan. 1948, 22.

62. Weaver, "Triumph and Tragedy in Television," typescript, 18, n.d. [early 1970s], copy in Weaver Papers, box 27.

63. Albert S. Keshen, "Red Ink and Headache, but TV Is Worth While," *Editor and Publisher*, 31 July 1948, 44; W. K. Agee, "Cross Channel Ownership of Mass Media," *Journalism Quarterly* 26 (Dec. 1949): 411, 413. According to a January 1957 compilation by NBC, 34 NBC affiliates were owned by newspapers. See "NBC Radio and TV News Owned Affiliates," [10 Jan. 1957], in NBC Papers, WHS, box 140.

64. [Memo], G. M. Burbach to Joseph Pulitzer II, 24 Sept. 1948, Pulitzer Papers, box 109; David Michael Weinstein, "Live from the Nation's Capital: A History of Television in Washington, D.C., 1946–1958" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1997), 40.

65. "TV-vs.-Newspapers," *Editor and Publisher*, 23 Apr. 1949, 66. See also "Effect of TV," ibid., 21 May 1949, 36; "Newspapers and TV," ibid., 2 July 1949, 28; Harvey J. Levin, *Broadcast Regulation and Joint Ownership of Media* (New York: New York University Press, 1960), 56, 70–71.

66. George M. Burbach to Joseph Pulitzer II, 27 Mar. 1952, Pulitzer Papers, box 112.

67. "Post-Dispatch Starts 'Tele' in St. Louis," *Editor and Publisher*, 15 Feb. 1947, 68; Charles W. Duke, "Television-Sports Tieup Seen for Press," *Editor and Publisher*, 19 July 1947, 14; [memo], G. M. Burbach to Joseph Pulitzer II, 24 Sept. 1948; Levin, *Broadcast Regulation*, 56–57; James L. Baughman, "'Wounded but Not Slain': The Orderly Retreat of the American Newspaper, 1945–2005," in *History of the Book in America*, vol. 5, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, forthcoming).

68. Levin, *Broadcast Regulation*, 5. The percentage of newspaper-owned stations fell to 34.7 in 1959. Ibid.

69. George W. Parker, "Newcomers Welcome in Detroit TV Boom," *Editor and Publisher*, 23 Oct. 1948, 40. See also Jerry Walker, "News in Television," 48.

70. Jerry Walker, "Baltimore Sunpapers and Coy Boost TV Ads," *Editor and Publisher*, 2 Apr. 1949, 50.

71. R. Christopher Anderson, "Hollywood TV: The Emergence of Television Production at Warner Bros. Pictures and David O. Selznick Productions"

(Ph.D. diss., University of Texas, 1988), 92; Richard M. Clurman, *To the End of Time: The Seduction and Conquest of a Media Empire* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 38–39; Curtis Prendergast, *The World of Time, Inc., 1960–1980* (New York: Atheneum, 1986), 135–38; Robert T. Elson, *The World of Time, Inc., 1941–1960* (New York: Atheneum, 1973), 233, 327–28; memo, Carleton D. Smith to Charles Denny, 20 July 1948, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 115; Noran E. Kersta to George Weaver, 5 Aug. 1948, ibid., box 586.

72. Abramson, *Zworykin*, 189–90; Ritchie, *Please Stand By*, 44, 106; "Television—A Case of War Neurosis," *Fortune*, Feb. 1946, 246; Jon Krampner, *The Man in the Shadows: Fred Coe and the Golden Age of Television* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 29, 35.

73. Typescript of telegram, S. B. Hickox Jr. to [NBC station managers], 5 Oct. 1948, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 593; report for the [NBC] Board of Directors' meeting, 3 Sept. 1948, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 885. See also Jonathan Sterne, "Television Under Construction: American Television and the Problem of Distribution," *Media, Culture and Society* 21 (July 1999): 512–16.

74. *Los Angeles Times*, 12 Apr. 1949, 13 Apr. 1949. Broadcast hours increased later the following year. See Clark Roberts, "TV Tidbits," ibid., 28 Sept. 1950.

75. In distributing kinescopes, NBC policy in 1949 played favorites. "First run" stations—Los Angeles, San Francisco, Houston, St. Paul, and Indianapolis—received kinescopes in one week. "Second run" affiliates—Seattle, Ft. Worth, Atlanta, and New Orleans—had to wait two weeks. Memo, Carleton D. Smith to N. Ray Kelly, 20 Sept. 1949, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 593.

76. Clark Roberts, "Big Names Spell Surprises for TV," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 Oct. 1950.

77. Walter Ames, "Jean Hersholt Celebrates 13 Years as Radio Star," *Los Angeles Times*, 13 Dec. 1950.

78. Jerry Walker, "News in Television," 48; Ted Scholts to Klaus Landsberg, 12 Mar. 1951, copy in Boyd Papers, box 74.

79. "Manners and Morals," *Time*, 27 Nov. 1950, 20.

80. Oliver Jensen, "Hopalong Hits the Jackpot," *Life*, 12 June 1950, 65.

81. Weinstein, "Live from the Nation's Capital," 104–5.

82. Tim Hollis, *Hi There, Boys and Girls! America's Local Children's TV Programs* (Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi, 2001); Harriet Van Horne, "The Chicago Touch," *Theatre Arts* 35 (July 1951): 37.

83. Margot Hardenbergh, "The Hustler: WTNH-TV, New Haven," in *Television in America*, Murray and Godfrey, 27.

84. Clark Roberts, "Horace Heidt's New Youth Opportunity Show Makes Its Debut on Television Tonight," *Los Angeles Times*, 2 Oct. 1950.

85. Walter Ames, "Pet Exchange Enters Fourth Year on KTTV," *Los Angeles Times*, 26 Sept. 1952.

86. Report, Owned and Operated Stations [NBC], Annual Management Meeting, 2–4 Oct. 1948, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 760; Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh, *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows; 1946–Present*, 6th ed. (New York: Ballantine, 1995), 272–73.

87. Review of *Square Dancing*, *Variety*, 12 Apr. 1950, 33.

88. Ed Ainsworth, "'Macbeth' Will Be Television Feature," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 Apr. 1949. A review of the program appeared in ibid., 17 Apr. 1949.

89. Conrad P. Harness, "Pipe Boxing and Beer Right into Your Den," *Washington Post*, 14 Apr. 1948.

90. Unless otherwise noted, all schedules are taken from Brooks and Marsh, *Complete Directory to Prime Time*, app. 1. The January 1948 calculation is in Arthur Daley, "When the Ringside Becomes the Fireside," *New York Times Magazine*, 27 Mar. 1948, 17.

91. NBC president Niles Trammell insisted that the telecast include updates on the convention. See memo, Carlton D. Smith to Warren Wade, 17 June 1948, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 593.

92. Memo, Bill Stern to Niles Trammell, 28 Sept. 1949, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 341, William C. Dekker to Walter Scott, 18 Feb. 1949, ibid., box 403. CBS was unable to realize a more ambitious scheme for sports telecasts. See Jerry Walker, "Events for Sponsors Pose 'Sports' Problem," *Editor and Publisher*, 11 Dec. 1948, 46.

93. Charles W. Duke, "Television-Sports Tieup Seen for Press," *Editor and Publisher*, 19 July 1947, 14.

94. Leo Burnett, "Report Number Two," copy in NBC Papers, LC, folder 586.

95. Radio editor Robert Conly of *Newsweek* had forecast this tendency. See "Promise of Television," 62. See also Edward P. Morgan, "Fifty-Mile Bleachers," *Collier's*, Sept. 1947, 30, 32.

96. John V. Mara to John F. Royal, 9 Feb. 1948, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 593; Stanley Frank, "Main Event: TV vs SRO," *Nation's Business*, Mar. 1949, 84.

97. Russell B. Adams Jr., *King C. Gillette* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), 200–201, 213–14; Richard O. Davies, *America's Obsession: Sports and Society since 1945* (Ft. Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1994), 31–32; *JWT News*, 29 Dec. 1947, 2, Thompson Papers.

98. Melvin Goldberg, "Politics and Television," app. B, v; "CBS Not to Abandon Video Activities," *Broadcasting*, 12 May 1947, 17.

99. Kisseloff, *The Box*, 126; Melvin Goldberg, "Politics and Television," app. D, 5.

100. Script, *The Jack Benny Program*, 12 Dec. 1948, Benny Papers, box 33, UCLA.

101. Frank Sturcken, *Live Television: The Golden Age of 1946–1958 in New York* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1990), 21; "At the Knife and Fork," *New*

Yorker, 29 June 1946, 16–17. See also David Gottlieb, "The Neighborhood Tavern and the Cocktail Lounge: A Study of Class Differences," *American Journal of Sociology* 62 (May 1957): 561.

102. Morgan, "Fifty-Mile Bleachers," 28, 30. See also "Television in the Tavern," *Newsweek*, 16 June 1947, 64; "Barrooms with a View," *Time*, 24 Mar. 1947, 63–64. A November 1948 NBC survey indicated that 66.8 percent of all bars and restaurants in four of New York's boroughs had televisions. Memo, H. M. Beville to Carleton Smith, 22 Nov. 1948, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 586. See also Anna McCarthy, "'The Front Row Is Reserved for Scotch Drinkers': Early Television's Tavern Audience," *Cinema Journal* 34 (Summer 1995): 31–49.

103. See remarks of Charles Hamilton, editor of the *Richmond News Leader*, in American Society of Newspaper Editors, *Problems of Journalism, 1955* (Washington, D.C.: American Society of Newspaper Editors,1955), 102. On basketball's lack of popularity during this period, see Benjamin G. Rader, *In Its Own Image: How Television Has Transformed Sports* (New York: Free Press, 1984), 146–47.

104. Daley, "When the Ringside Becomes the Fireside," 58–59; Crosby, "The Television Brain," *New York Herald Tribune*, 20 Dec. 1948, reprinted in Crosby, *Out of the Blue: A Book about Radio and Television* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), 131–32. See also Randy Roberts and James Olson, *Winning Is the Only Thing; Sports in America since 1945* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 101–2.

105. Richard O. Davies, *Main Street Blues; The Decline of Small-Town America* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998), 149; Jack Gould, "Rise and Fall of the Quiz Empire," *New York Times Magazine*, 23 Sept. 1958, 65; Roberts and Olson, *Winning Is the Only Thing*, 99–101; Michael Ritchie, *Please Stand By*, 83–84, 138–40; Joe Jares, *Whatever Happened to Gorgeous George?* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 11. On Toscanini's enthusiasm for wrestling, see Stephen Davis, *Say Kids! What Time Is It? Notes from the Peanut Gallery* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1987), 25–26.

106. Ginger Rudeseal Carter, "WSB-TV: The 'Eyes of the South,'" in *Television in America*, Murray and Godfrey, 84; "Television Makes Official Debut Here Tuesday," *Minneapolis Star*, 26 Apr. 1948.

107. *Worthington Miner: A Directors Guild of America Oral History* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1985), 183; "The Present Television Boom," *Consumers' Research Bulletin* 22 (July 1948), 17.

108. Parker, "Newcomers Welcome," 40. See also Jules Tygiel, *Past Time: Baseball as History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 151–52.

109. *Los Angeles Times*, 1 Oct. 1951. RCA early in 1951 prepared an advertising campaign organized around baseball telecasts. See Minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 26 Feb. 1951, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 837.

110. Lawrence W. Lowman to Walter W. Mulbry, 8 June 1948, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 586.

111. Clark Roberts, "Horace Heidt's New Youth."

112. Boxing was the last sporting event to merit regular prime-time slots through the 1950s. See Roberts and Olson, *Winning Is the Only Thing*, 103–4, 107–8.

113. *JWT News*, 23 June 1950, 1, Thompson Papers; Richard Huff, "At 50, WPIX Celebrates Birth of a Station," *New York Daily News*, 15 June 1998.

114. Alva Johnston, "Television: Boom or Bubble?" *SEP*, 9 Mar. 1946, 132; "Kukla, Fran, and Ollie," *Television Magazine* (May 1949): 25.

115. Michael Ritchie, *Please Stand By*, 152.

116. *JWT News*, 5 Jan. 1948, 2, Thompson Papers.

117. Stephen Davis, *Say Kids!* 45.

118. Jack Gould, "Hail Howdy Doody!" *New York Times*, 14 Nov. 1948, reprinted in *Watching Television Come of Age: The New York Times Reviews, by Jack Gould*, ed. Lewis L. Gould (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 164–66; Stephen Davis, *Say Kids!* 47–48.

119. Stephen Davis, *Say Kids!* 37, 41, 48.

120. Mimeograph, "Howdy Doodlings," 22 Apr. 1949, copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 403; Stephen Davis, *Say Kids!* 97.

121. Stephen Davis, *Say Kids!* 26–27, 30, 66.

122. Leo Bogart, *The Age of Television*, 3rd ed. (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1972), 19, 96–97, 245–46.

123. Max Wilk, *The Golden Age of Television: Notes from the Survivors* (New York: Dell, 1976), 55.

124. Script, *The Jack Benny Television Program*, CBS-TV, 28 Jan. 1951, Benny Papers, box 42, UCLA.

125. Notes of interview with Berle, ca. 1956, Mayer Papers, box 63; "The Child Wonder," *Time*, 16 May 1949, 75.

126. Berle later claimed he had wanted to enter television. A talent agent who saw his night club act had recommended him to NBC. See Kisseloff, *The Box*, 308; Milton Berle and Haskel Frankel, *Milton Berle* (New York: Dell, 1974), 286–87.

127. Damon Runyon, "The Brighter Side," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 25 Feb. 1941, and 14 Nov. 1946, clippings in "Berle" file, Hearst Collection; Robert Sylvester, "The Strange Career of Milton Berle," *Saturday Evening Post*, 19 Mar. 1949, 38. One of Berle's writers remarked, "He had one of the funniest, if not *the* funniest, nightclub acts ever." Kisseloff, *The Box*, 114.

128. "Television's Top," *Newsweek*, 16 May 1949, 58; Berle interview notes, Mayer Papers.

129. Saul Pett, "He Yells, Acts All Roles, Leads Music, and Frets," *Los Angeles Examiner* (?), 29 Nov. 1953, Hearst Collection; Walter Ames, "Bill

Welsh Signs Exclusive Video Contract with KTTV," *Los Angeles Times*, 22 Mar. 1951.

130. Videotape, *Texaco Star Theater*, 18 Jan. 1949, copy in UCLA Film and TV Archives; Berle comments on NBC, *The Tonight Show*, 24 Mar. 1978; Larry Gelbart, *Laughing Matters* (New York: Random House, 1998), 63, 64; Sylvester, "Strange Career of Milton Berle," 153–54; Linda Gutstein, "Star Talk: Berle on Berle," in *TV Book The Ultimate Television Book*, ed. Judy Fireman, 154 (New York: Workman, 1977); Damon Runyon, "The Brighter Side," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 14 Nov. 1946; David Bianculli, "Uncle Miltie TV Debut Now a Golden Memory," *New York Daily News*, 8 June 1998; Kisseloff, *The Box*, 113–14; Arthur Frank Wertheim, "The Rise and Fall of Milton Berle," in *American History/American Television*, ed. John E. O'Connor, 64–65 (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1983); Sylvester, "Strange Career of Milton Berle," 153–54. See also Henry Jenkins, *What Made Pistachio Nuts? Early Sound Comedy and the Vaudeville Aesthetic* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 63, 75, 77.

131. Steve Allen, *The Funny Men* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), 76. See also Philip Hamburger's far more scathing "The World of Milton Berle," *New Yorker*, 29 Oct. 1949, 91–92. Berle later insisted that he exaggerated his manner because the TV cameras partially blocked the audience. "I learned quickly that I couldn't do anything small, because the studio audience couldn't see it, and if the studio audience didn't laugh, chances were the home audience wouldn't either." Berle and Frankel, *Milton Berle*, 296.

132. Gilbert Seldes, *The Public Arts* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), 141, 143.

133. Albert F. McLean Jr., *American Vaudeville as Ritual* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), 106–7.

134. On Berle and the Jewish vaudeville tradition, see Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 556–71.

135. Kisseloff, *The Box*, 305. See also Gilbert Seldes, *The Great Audience* (New York: Viking, 1950), 188; Steven D. Stark, *Glued to the Set: The 60 Television Shows and Events that Made Us Who We are Today* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 9–10; "Burlesque's Reprieve," *Variety*, 7 July 1937, 47.

136. Notes of interview with Pat Weaver, ca. 1958, "Berle Notebook," Milton Mayer Papers, box 63; John Crosby, "Progress Report," *New York Herald Tribune*, 26 Nov. 1948; Berle and Frankel, *Milton Berle*, 297.

137. "The Child Wonder," 70.

138. Script, *The Jack Benny Program*, CBS, 15 May 1949, copy in Benny Papers, box 34, UCLA.

139. Wertheim, "Rise and Fall of Milton Berle," 69–70; script, *Texaco Star Theater*, 13 Jan. 1953, 6–3, Berle Papers, box 4; *Teletopics*, 11 Apr. 1950, McCann-Erickson newsletter, copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 403; Clark Rob-

erts, "Big Names Spell Surprises for TV," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 Oct. 1950; U.S. Department of Commerce, *Census of Population: 1950*, 1:xxvii and 1:29.

140. Mimeograph, "Howdy Doodlings," 22 Apr. 1949, copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 403.

141. "Berle, Martin, Dempsey Aid Grid Clash Tonight," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 10 Aug. 1949, Hearst Collection. See also Mark Williams, "Paramount's KTLA," 333.

142. Berle and Frankel, *Milton Berle*, 312; Alfred Bester, "The Good Old Days of Mr. Television," *Holiday*, Feb. 1958, 97.

143. Harry C. Kopf, "The Outlook for Television," remarks, 24 Sept. 1948, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 758.

144. Stephen Davis, *Say Kids!* 41.

145. Michael Ritchie, *Please Stand By*, 162–63; *Life*, 27 May 1946, 84.

146. Kisseloff, *The Box*, 114; notes of interview with Wally Jordan [ca. 1956], Mayer Papers, box 63.

147. Christopher H. Sterling and Timothy R. Haight, *The Mass Media: Aspen Institute Guide to Communication Industry Trends* (New York: Praeger, 1978), 372.

148. George Maksian, "Television without Mr. Television," *New York Daily News*, 23 July 1982; Wertheim, "Rise and Fall of Milton Berle," 70–71.

149. Gelbart, *Laughing Matters*, 64.

150. See, for example, George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 44–47.

151. Quoted in Boddy, "Launching Television," 52.

152. Ira Glick and Sidney J. Levy, *Living with Television* (Chicago: Aldine, 1962), 31.

153. See Sylvania Electric Products survey cited in *Television Magazine* (May 1949): 26, 31.

154. Weinstein, "Live from the Nation's Capital," 134–35. Based on data from the Market Research Corporation, Leo Bogart estimated the penetration of televisions by income level. In 1949, 30 percent of those in the upper and second fourths owned televisions, compared to 27 percent in the next fourth and 13 percent in the lower fourth. Bogart, *Age of Television*, 14. See also summary of report by the Psychological Corporation based on 10,000 home interviews in May 1950, in *JWT News*, 28 Aug. 1950, 2, Thompson Papers; Sue Bowden and Avner Offer, "Household Appliances and the Use of Time: The United States and Britain since the 1920s," *Economic Historical Review* 47 (Nov. 1994): 735; and J. M. Carman and J. D. Kaczor, "Ownership Patterns for Major Household Appliances," in *Studies in the Demand for Consumer Household Equipment*, ed. Carman, 121–23 (Berkeley: Institute of Business and Economic Research, 1965); memo, George MacGovern to John H. MacDonald, 28 Apr. 1949, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 499.

155. Thomas E. Coffin, "Television's Impact on Society," *American Psychologist* 10 (Oct. 1955): 631; Harness, "Pipe Boxing." See also Sydney Roslow, "TV Coverage and Listenership," in *Television Advertising and Production Handbook*, ed. Irving Settel and Norman Glenn, 296 (N.Y.: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1953). On the baby-sitter "crisis" of the late 1940s, see Ellison, "Baby Sitting's Big Business Now," 36.

156. Barbara M. Kelly, *Expanding the American Dream: Building and Rebuilding Levittown* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 85, 87.

157. Hubbell Robinson Jr., "Television Faces Life," *Esquire*, Jan. 1955, 41; Fred Allen to Jack Eigen, 27 Apr. 1950, Allen Papers, file 39a.

158. Bogart, *Age of Television*, 65.

Chapter 4. The Regulators

1. Louis Menand, *American Studies* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 119–20.

2. *Congressional Quarterly Almanac* 1952 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1953), 271; *Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1954* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1955), 211–12.

3. Fly to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 5 May 1941, President's Secretary's File, box 149, Roosevelt Papers; David Brinkley, *11 Presidents, 4 Wars, 22 Political Conventions . . .* (New York: Knopf, 1995), 61.

4. FCC, *Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licenses* (Washington, D.C., 1946); Murray Edelman, *The Licensing of Radio Services in the United States, 1927 to 1947; A Study in Administration Formulation of Policy* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1950), 77–79; Richard J. Meyer, "Reaction to the 'Blue Book'" *Journal of Broadcasting* 6 (Fall 1962): 295–312.

5. Michael J. Socolow, "To Network a Nation: N.B.C., C.B.S., and the Development of National Network Radio in the United States, 1925–1950" (Ph.D. diss., Georgetown University, 2001), chap. 4.

6. Edwin C. Johnson, oral history transcript, 3–4, 1965, Library of American Broadcasting, University of Maryland; "The Federal Communications Commission—a Profile," *Television Magazine* (June 1953): 22–24, 38; James O. Freedman, *Crisis and Legitimacy: The Administrative Process and American Government* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 35, 66–69; Hugh R. Slotten, *Radio and Television Regulation: Broadcast Technology in the United States, 1920–1960* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Lawrence Lessing, "The Television Freeze," *Fortune*, Nov. 1949, 124, 126.

7. Robert Britt Horwitz, *The Irony of Regulatory Reform: The Deregulation of American Telecommunications* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 205–30.

8. Gale Eugene Peterson, "President Harry S. Truman and the Independent Commissions, 1945–1952" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1973),

25, 474; "Background to Barrow Report," *Broadcasting*, 7 Oct. 1957, 36. On the courts and the regulatory agencies, see, for example, William H. Nicholls, "Federal Regulatory Agencies and Courts," *American Economic Review* 34 (Mar. 1944): 56–75; C. Herman Pritchett, *The Roosevelt Court; A Study in Judicial Politics and Values* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), chap. 7.

9. Memo, Charles Willis to Sherman Adams, 22 Sept. 1954, Eisenhower Papers, OF 16/187; notes of interview with Willis, 6 July 1973, Institute for Public Representation Papers; Alonzo L. Hamby, *Man of the People; A Life of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 504–5; U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Commerce, *Appointments to the Regulatory Agencies; The Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Trade Commission (1949–1974)*, Committee Print, 94th Congress, 2nd sess., 1976, 30–33. Prior to the inauguration, Eisenhower aide Robert Cutler had friends at AT&T prepare a memo on the FCC that urged the naming of commissioners with "no prejudice against the capitalistic system." The chairman "should be a strict party man." Undated memo and Cutler memo to Sherman Adams, 12 Feb. 1953, Eisenhower Papers, OF 16/187. Anne Langman, "Television: Magnuson Committee Report," *Nation*, 20 July 1957, 40.

10. Bartley to Eisenhower, 22 Dec. 1960, Eisenhower Papers, OF 16/188.

11. See Philip Elman, "Administrative Reform of the Federal Trade Commission," *Georgetown Law Journal* 59 (Mar. 1971), 853–54.

12. In a handwritten letter to Truman, Rayburn wrote, "I am more interested in this than any other recommendation [that] I have ever made to you." Rayburn to Truman, 16 Sept. 1950, Truman Papers, Official File, box 112.

13. Lawrence W. Lichty, "Members of the Federal Radio Commission and Federal Communications Commission, 1927–1961," *Journal of Broadcasting* 6 (Winter 1961–62): 23–34; Lichty, "The Impact of FRC and FCC Commissioners' Backgrounds on the Regulation of Broadcasting," ibid. 6 (Spring 1962): 105–6; Lichty, "An Analysis of the FCC Membership," *Public Utilities Fortnightly* 68 (23 Nov. 1961): 828–33.

14. McConnaughey, "Educational Broadcasting," address to National Association of Educational Broadcasters, 28 Oct. 1954, copy in Frieda Hennock Papers, Radcliffe College, box 15. Doerfer revisited his regulatory philosophy in *Federal Communications Bar Journal*, 27 (1974): 142–45. See also "Ike Names Doerfer to FCC to Complete Merrill Term," *Broadcasting*, 23 Mar. 1953, 50.

15. Fly, "Regulation of Radio Broadcasting in the Public Interest," manuscript, Jan. 1941, Fly Papers, box 4.

16. Slotten, *Radio and Television Regulation*, 112; Bradley Francis Chisholm, "The CBS Color Television Venture: A Study of Failed Innovation in the Broadcasting Industry" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1987), 145–46. See also Mickie Edwardson, "James Lawrence Fly v. David Sarnoff: Blitzkrieg over Television," *Journalism History* 25 (Summer 1999): 42–52.

17. Chisholm, "CBS Color Television Venture," 203, 211–12; "Television—A Case of War Neurosis," *Fortune*, Feb. 1946, 107–8.

18. Peter C. Goldmark, *Maverick Inventor: My Turbulent Years at CBS* (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1973), 40, 46, 50, 53.

19. Goldmark, *Maverick Inventor*, 54–55, 88–90; Chisholm, "CBS Color Television Venture," 220, 274–75.

20. Chisholm, "CBS Color Television Venture," 211–12.

21. "Television Withdrawals at 57," *Broadcasting*, 13 May 1946, 93; "Howard Hughes Asks FCC to Withdraw L.A. Television and FM Applications," ibid., 28 Oct. 1946, 101; Chisholm, "CBS Color Television Venture," 273–75.

22. "Television—A Case of War Neurosis," 250, 253.

23. Memos, O. B. Hanson to Frank E. Mullen, 8 June 1945, 17 Oct. 1945, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 585; Chisholm, "CBS Color Television Venture," 100, 151, 178.

24. William S. Paley, *As It Happened; A Memoir* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1979), 185. David Lilienthal, a prominent former Washington insider who advised Sarnoff, severely criticized RCA's lobbying of the FCC. See diary entry, 31 May 1951, *Venturesome Years, 1950–1955*, vol. 3 of *The Journals of David E. Lilienthal* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 167–68, 323. The "interest group" model might better explain the commission's behavior. See William T. Gormley Jr., *The Politics of Public Utility Regulation* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983), 31–33, and chap. 5.

25. FCC, *Reports*, 43, pt. 1 (1947), 79, 90–91.

26. Sterling and Haight, *Mass Media*, 372. In 1960, the average cost of black-and-white televisions was $132 compared to $392 for color receivers. Ibid. Goldmark, *Maverick Inventor*, 108, understates and dismisses the cost issue, as does Chisholm, "CBS Color Television Venture," chap. 4, in his analysis of the FCC's 1947 decision. Most Americans quickly came to regard televisions as expensive if necessary necessities. Yet they wanted to limit the transaction cost. The same imperative caused most to avoid paying more for UHF converters until federal regulations in the mid–1960s forced the issue.

27. Paley, *As It Happened*, 184–85; Chisholm, "CBS Color Television Venture," 222, 228.

28. In 1950, the NBC television network had a $48,000 profit compared to $458,000 for its five owned and operated stations. Report for the Board of Directors' meeting, 1 June 1951, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 878.

29. Lawrence Lessing, "The Television Freeze," *Fortune*, Nov. 1949, 123.

30. Sterling and Haight, *Mass Media*, 49, 372; *Broadcasting Yearbook, 1965* (Washington, D.C.: Broadcasting Magazine, 1965), A16. Thomas Schatz is among those guilty of overstating the effects of the freeze. See Schatz, "Desilu, *I Love Lucy*, and the Rise of Network TV," in *Making Television: Authorship and the Production Process*, ed. Robert J. Thompson and Gary Burns, 119, 125 (New York: Praeger, 1990).

31. In 1955, 80 percent of all homes in the Northeast had television, compared to 46 percent in the South and 64 percent in the Pacific States. The gap all but disappears by 1960. The big-city and small-town divide is more pronounced until the mid–1960s. See Sterling and Haight, *Mass Media*, 373.

32. Quoted in memo, Stockton Helffrich to Continuity Acceptance Personnel, 5 Jan. 1951, NBC, CART Reports.

33. Johnson to Wayne Coy, 12 Nov. 1949, 25 Nov. 1949, and 6 Feb. 1950; Johnson to Jack Gould, 3 Feb. 1950; Johnson to E. M. Webster, 22 June 1950, Senate TV Inquiry records, box 696; FCC, *Reports* 41 (1950), 1, 44–49, 111; Chisholm, "CBS Color Television Venture," 339–40, 360ff, 427–29, and chap. 6; Charles Kirshner, "The Color Television Controversy," *University of Pittsburgh Law Review* 13 (Fall 1951): 65–84; Goldmark, *Maverick Inventor*, 109, 114–19.

34. "Summary of Allocations Proceedings," [testimony of Philco, RCA, and CBS witnesses], 19 Oct., 25 Oct., and 26 Oct. 1950, in Du Mont Laboratories Papers, box 114. As the FCC's chief economist observed in mid–1954, a high-powered transmitter that would have narrowed this gap had yet to be developed. See H. H. Goldin, "Economic and Regulatory Problems in the Broadcast Field," *Land Economics* 30 (Aug. 1954): 226.

35. John C. Doerfer, address before the Federal Communications Bar Journal, 8 Jan. 1960, Doerfer Papers.

36. Wayne Coy to Edwin C. Johnson, n.d., [early 1949], reprinted in Pike and Fischer, *Radio Regulation* 91 (1949): 131; FCC, *Reports* 41 (1952), 148, 158–64, 206.

37. Helen G. Stevens to Stuart Symington, 31 May 1955, Symington Papers, box 46. See also David M. Giltinan to Harley Kilgore, 2 May 1955, Kilgore Papers, box 14; Senate *TV Inquiry* hearings, 1095–106; Irving Kolodin, "Whose Money Talks?" *Saturday Review*, 30 Apr. 1955, 39; Harry MacArthur, "Support for Fee TV?" *Washington Star*, 13 Mar. 1955, and MacArthur, "Prepare for Fee TV, It Seems Inevitable," ibid., 1 May 1955, E–7; reply comments of Zenith Radio Corp. and Teco, Inc., 9 Sept. 1955, 30, 37–38, Docket 11279, FCC Records, NA.

38. True to the new, probusiness sensibility of postwar America, the commission cast its ETV policies in a positive light, and not as an indictment of commercial TV. "Whether or Not Educators Get TV Channels, Com'l. Video Is on Spot," *Variety*, 31 Jan. 1951, 22, 30; Frieda B. Hennock, "Educational Opportunities in Television," *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* 172 (15 Mar. 1951): 11, 41; Susan L. Brinson, "Frieda Hennock: FCC Activist and the Campaign for Educational Television, 1948–1951," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 18 (Aug. 1998): 411–30; Hennock to Truman, 26 June 1952, Official Files 112, box 527; Paul A. Walker, "The Time to Act Is Now," in *A Television Policy for Education*, ed. Carroll V. Newsom, 30 (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1952); "Walker Foresees TV as Classroom

Fixture," *Radio Television Daily*, 10 July 1952, 3; FCC, *Reports* 41 (1952), 148, 163. On Chairman Coy's unhappiness with commercial television, see "FCC Calls DC Conference on TV Programming," *Variety*, 31 Jan. 1951, 23, 30. On Bricker's and Benton's enthusiasm for ETV see *Congressional Record*, 97, pt. 3, 13 Apr. 1951, 3823; Bricker statement, 16 Sept. 1953, Bricker Papers, box 108.

39. FCC, *Reports* 41 (1952), 148, 233–34, 243, 341. On commercial interests' coveting ETV reservations, see Robert B. Glynn, "Public Policy and Broadcasting," in *Television's Impact on American Culture*, 83–84, 89 (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1956).

40. Memo, Jeanette Sayre Smith to Marjorie Fiske, 7 Jan. 1953, copy in Paul F. Lazarsfeld Papers, box 145. Even supposed advocates of educational television could be lax. Meeting with Robert E. Lee, whom he had just named to the FCC in 1953, President Eisenhower suggested that he contact his brother Milton, president of Penn State College, about educational TV. Milton Eisenhower had been among the more prominent educators supporting ETV. Lee dutifully wrote the president's brother. He never replied. Robert Emmet Lee and John Shosky, *In the Public Interest: The Life of Robert Emmet Lee from the FBI to the FCC* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1996), 136.

41. Gilbert Seldes, "A Siberia for Culture?" *Printers' Ink*, 9 Mar. 1951, 35, 56, 60.

42. Raymond H. Wittcoff, "Proposal for a National Educational Television Network," in *Television Policy for Education*, ed. Newsom, 234–35.

43. Jack Gould, "Low-Cost Brain Waves," *New York Times*, 4 Jan. 1957, 84; Mrs. Gerald T. Borcherdt to Warren Magnuson, 6 Mar. 1956, Senate TV Inquiry records, box 702; Charles A. Siepmann, *TV and Our School Crisis* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1958); "'What'll I See on ETV?' Sampling Indicates Trends," *Educational Television News*, 1 Dec. 1953, 3; James Bryant Conant to Franklin Patterson, 22 Mar. 1966, Carnegie Commission on Educational Television, Papers, box 5–9; Wilbur Schramm, Jack Lyle, and Ithiel de Sola Pool, *The People Look at Educational Television: A Report of Nine Representative ETV Stations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), 13–17, surveys the "typical" ETV schedule of the early 1960s.

44. Justin Miller, "The Commercial Broadcaster views Educational Television," highlights of an address, Institute on Educational Television for Washington, Georgetown University, 16 Oct. 1952, copy in Paul Lazarsfeld Papers, box 150. See also memo, D. W. Dresden to R. R. Mullen, 10 Mar. 1953, copy in ibid.

45. Ithiel de Sola Pool and Barbara Adler, "Education Television: Is Anyone Watching," *Journal of Social Issues* 18 (no. 2, 1962): 50; Kent Geiger and Robert Sokol, "Educational Television in Boston: Memo #3," in *The Impact of Educational Television*, ed. Wilbur Schramm, 50 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960); editorial, "KETC's Plight," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 25 June 1955, clipping in Thomas C. Hennings Papers, folder 6282.

46. Hennock to Baron de Hirschmeyer, 6 Mar. 1953, Hennock Papers, Radcliffe Library, box 3. See also copy of statement to Senate Commerce Committee, 16 Apr. 1953, ibid., box 8, file 110.

47. Gould, "Low-Cost Brain Waves"; Newsom, "Basic Planning for Educational Television," in *Television Policy for Education*, ed. Newsom, 105–10.

48. John Walker Powell, *Channels of Learning: The Story of Educational Television* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1962), 58–64.

49. Decker to Wayne Coy, 12 Apr. 1951, copy in the James P. Kem Papers, folder 8429. See also Robert B. Caldwell to Kem, 3 May 1951, ibid., folder 8433; Telford Taylor, general counsel of the Joint Committee for Educational Television, acknowledged this argument at length while advocating that New York State establish an ETV network. See his statement before the Temporary State Commission on the Use of Television for Educational Purposes, 21 Jan. 1953, copy in Lazarsfeld Papers, box 150.

50. Glynn, "Public Policy," 107; Daniel Francis Wozniak, "Education's First Television Station, WOI-TV, 1950–1956" (Ph.D. diss., Iowa State College, 1958), 45–46. The FCC had all but forced Missouri to go commercial when the commission rejected the university's proposal to dedicate 50 percent of its programming to educational programming. The Columbia market was too lightly populated, the FCC concluded, to justify such altruism. The university should either operate a commercial station or surrender the license. See FCC, *Reports* 41 (1952), 148, 377–79.

51. FCC, *Reports* 41 (1956), 779–83; George McConnaughey to Norris Cotton, 30 Jan. 1956, Cotton Papers, box 82. For similar reasons, the commission that year also ended an educational VHF reservation for College Station, Texas. FCC, *Reports* 41 (1956), 784–86.

52. Powell, *Channels of Learning*, 155; Wilbur Schramm, "The Audiences of Educational Television," in *The Impact of Educational Television*, ed. Schramm, 19 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960).

53. FCC, *Reports* 41 (1952), 148, 208–9; George E. Sterling, address to Radio and TV Broadcasters Association, 13 June 1952, copy in Du Mont Papers, box 122; John C. Doerfer, address before Radio and Television Executives Association of New England, Boston, 16 Nov. 1953, 8–9, Doerfer Papers.

54. [Memo], George M. Burbach to Joseph Pulitzer II, 10 Nov. 1953, Pulitzer Papers, box 113.

55. Senate *Status of UHF*, 57–58; House *Monopoly Problems*, 4528–29.

56. Hennock to Elmer Paul Brock, 11 May 1955, Hennock Papers, Truman Library, box 11.

57. Cecil M. Sansbury to Frieda Hennock, 13 Aug. 1954, Hennock Papers, Truman Library, box 10. See also John C. Johnson to Rosel Hyde, 10 Mar. 1954, copy in ibid.

58. Educational interests operated another 15 UHF channels in 1961. Sterling and Haight, *Mass Media*, 49, 372. On UHF's woes, see also Hazel Cooley, "Monopoly in TV; Stifling the UHF Bands," *Nation*, 19 Feb. 1955, 159–61.

59. *Broadcasting Yearbook, 1960* (Washington, D.C.: Broadcasting Magazine, 1960), A84.

60. Wilbur Schramm, Jack Lyle, and Ithiel de Sola Pool, *The People Look at Educational Television; A Report of Nine Representative ETV Stations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), 35; Powell, *Channels of Learning*, 154–59.

61. Stanton testimony, 26 Jan. 1962, Docket 12782, vol. 12, *Proc.*, 56:8573–575, FCC Records, NA.

62. Melvin A. Goldberg, "Analysis of Proposed FCC Allocation Plan (3/22/51)," copy in Du Mont Records, box 116; Lessing, "Television Freeze," 164; Gary Newton Hess, "An Historical Study of the Du Mont Television Network" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1960), 162–67. Subsequent scholarly analyses praised the Du Mont Plan. See especially Thomas L. Schuessler, "Structural Barriers to the Entry of Additional Television Networks: The Federal Communications Commission's Spectrum Management Policies," *Southern California Law Review* 54 (July 1981): 921–29; Bruce M. Owen, "Structural Approaches to the Problem of TV Network Economic Dominance," Center for the Study of Business Regulation, Graduate School of Business Administration, Duke University, 1978, paper no. 27.

63. Memo, Curtis B. Plummer to the Commission, 23 July 1954, Hennock Papers, Truman Library, box 11.

64. Quoted in "Individual Views of Senator William A. Purtell on the Television Inquiry . . . ," 20 July 1956, Senate TV Inquiry, box 687. The prospect of Fresno losing its only VHF channel prompted much protest from farm groups. See resolutions, Boards of Directors, Kings County Farm Bureau, 21 May 1956, and Tulare County Farm Bureau, 17 May 1956, copies in ibid.

65. Mimeograph of telegram, Clyde W. Rembert to Thomas A. Wofford, 16 July 1956, copy in Crutchfield Papers, box 4. For similar claims, see Crutchfield to Sam J. Ervin Jr., 16 July 1956, ibid.; W. J. B. Dorn to Newton N. Minow, 8 Aug. 1961, and clipping Florence (S.C.) *Morning News*, [11 Nov. 1961], copies in Dorn Papers.

66. Charles Crutchfield to Strom Thurmond, 3 July 1956, Crutchfield Papers, box 4; "No. 1 TV Problem: Thawing the Freeze," *Business Week*, 6 May 1950, 34.

67. FCC, *Reports* 41 (1952), 148, 171.

68. Allen B. Du Mont, "TV—The Glory Road to Peace and Understanding," *Variety*, 3 Jan. 1951, 112.

69. *Broadcasting Yearbook, 1964* (Washington, D.C.: Broadcasting Magazine, 1964), 25; Sterling and Haight, *Mass Media*, 49.

70. John L. Booth to Frieda Hennock, 2 June 1954, Hennock Papers, Truman Library, box 10.

71. Hugh M. Smith to Warren Magnuson, 4 Oct. 1956, Senate TV Inquiry, box 687.

72. Cooley, "Monopoly in TV," 159. See also Anne W. Langman, "Government Regulation," *Nation*, 11 Aug. 1956, 126–27.

73. The commission permitted each network to acquire two additional stations if they were in the UHF; NBC and CBS briefly operated UHF outlets, without success. The gesture appears to have been an effort to relieve them of blame for the higher frequency's woes. See FCC, *Annual Report, 1954*, 91; Frank Stanton to John W. Bricker, 29 Jan. 1954, Bricker Papers, box 102; "UHF No Go against Multiple V's—NBC," *Broadcasting*, 16 June 1958, 32; press release, NBC, 7 Jan. 1955, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 171. Du Mont also tried and failed to operate a UHF, in Kansas City. See Senate *Status of UHF*, 51–57.

74. Charles Harvey Crutchfield, "Confidential Senate Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee Television Questionnaire Network Affiliates," n.d. [1956], copy in Crutchfield Papers, box 3. See also WWJ-TV, chap. 4, Detroit, "Response to Television Questionnaire," n.d. [1956], Senate TV Inquiry, box 717; CBS response to committee questionnaire, [23 Nov. 1956], Exhibit I, 2, Senate TV Inquiry, box 697; minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 14 Apr. 1952, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 835; Thomas Porter Robinson, *Radio Networks and the Federal Government* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), chap. 16.

75. Senate *Status of UHF*, 229, 1002–3; Hess, "Historical Study," 70. Robert W. Sarnoff of NBC echoed Stanton during Senate hearings two years later. See Senate *TV Inquiry* hearings, 2428.

76. John H. Poole to Frieda B. Hennock, 19 July 1954, Hennock Papers, Truman Library, box 10. A similar fate beset KCEB, channel 23 in Tulsa. NBC dropped its affiliation agreement with KCEB in favor of a VHF. See "Response to Television Questionnaire," n.d. [1956], Senate TV Inquiry, box 713.

77. By then, UHF channels were more competitive, and some CBS and NBC affiliates on VHF became ABC affiliates. See also Senate *Status of UHF*, 939.

78. Avard Wellington Brinton, "The Regulation of Broadcasting by the FCC: A Case Study in Regulation by Independent Commission" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1962), 224, 301; Senate *Status of UHF*, 132; "Com'r. Lee Speaks His Mind," *Variety*, 20 Mar. 1957, 43; "The Darkened Channels: UHF Television and the FCC," *Harvard Law Review* 75 (June 1962): 1585–86. Goldmark, *Maverick Inventor*, 94–96, and others, too romantically, in my view, believe an all-UHF policy would have been the best approach. See also Gerd Horten, *Radio Goes to War: The Cultural Politics of Propaganda during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 181.

79. Senate *TV Inquiry* hearings, 2, 21, 318, 411; John Michael Kittross, "Television Frequency Allocation Policy in the United States" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1960), 369.

80. Doerfer, address to Regional Meeting of the NARTB, Dallas, 16 Nov. 1955. See also Doerfer, "Broadcasting and Anti-Trust Problems," address, Broadcasting Advertising Club of Chicago, 29 Oct. 1956, copies in Doerfer Papers; "The UHF Dilemma," *Television Magazine* (Sept. 1954): 27, 74–75.

81. FCC, *Reports* 41 (1952): 148, 167, 169–71.

82. Doerfer, dissenting statement, [June 1956], Docket 11532, vol. 13, FCC Records, GSA.

83. George E. Sterling, address to Radio and TV Broadcasters Association, 13 June 1952, copy in Du Mont Records, box 122. See also Goldberg, analysis (3/22/51), copy in Du Mont Records, box 116; John C. Doerfer to Gerald Morgan, ca. early 1959, copy in Eisenhower Papers, GF41-A(2)/380.

84. Philip T. Rosen, *The Modern Stentors: Radio Broadcasters and the Federal Government, 1920–1934* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1980), 135–36; Richard R. John, *Network Nation: How Politics Shaped American Telecommunications from the War of 1812 to Bell Labs*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, forthcoming), chap. 8. See also John, *Spreading the News: The American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995); Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Mass Communications* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 48, 87–92, 171, 192, 207; Roland Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Corporate Imagery in American Big Business* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 86–87.

85. Slotten, *Radio and Television Regulation*, 238; Ben C. Fisher, "Communications Acts Amendments, 1952—An Attempt to Legislate Administrative Fairness," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 22 (Autumn 1957): 672–96.

86. Kennedy to Arthur Rosenstein, 3 Apr. 1958, Pre-Presidential Papers, box 706. See also Harvey J. Levin, "Regulatory Efficiency, Reform, and the FCC," *Georgetown Law Journal* 50 (Fall 1961): 26–27; George Bookman, "Regulation by Elephant, Rabbit, and Lark," *Fortune*, July 1961, 139; *Broadcasting*, 24 Mar. 1958, 66. When David Lawrence, the conservative editor of *U.S. News and World Report*, called for an auction system, a much more liberal Edward R. Murrow of CBS praised his "completely novel and admirable idea." Murrow to Lawrence, 16 Jan. 1959, Murrow Papers, file 2-B-7.

87. Robert Bendiner, "The FCC—Who Will Regulate the Regulators?" *Reporter* 17 (19 Sept. 1957): 26–30; Anthony Lewis, "Lawyers Deplore F.C.C. Procedure in Deciding Cases," *New York Times*, 2 Mar. 1958; Bernard Schwartz, *The Professor and the Commissions* (New York: Knopf, 1959), 156–64. In an influential critique, Louis L. Jaffe, professor of law at Harvard, accused the commission not of political bias but of gross inconsistency. See "The Scandal in TV Licensing," *Harper's*, Sept. 1957, 77–79, 82–83. For the FCC's competitive license criteria, see FCC, *Reports* 11 (Index Digest), 1462–64.

88. Sterling Quinlan, *The Hundred Million Dollar Lunch* (Chicago: J. Philip O'Hara, 1974), 4–5. The president himself refused frequent requests that he

intervene in license deliberations. See, for example, Gerald Morgan to William Davis Taylor, 11 Jan. 1957, Eisenhower Papers, GF40A/379, Eisenhower to Harry Butcher, 5 Sept. 1956, ibid., OF16/188.

89. Robert T. Elson, *The World of Time, Inc., 1941–1960* (New York: Atheneum, 1973), 327–28; Curtis Prendergast, *The World of Time, Inc.: The Intimate History of a Changing Enterprise, 1960–1980* (New York: Atheneum, 1986), 135–36, 272–74; Richard M. Clurman, *To the End of Time: The Seduction and Conquest of a Media Empire* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 38–39.

90. Bernard Schwartz, *The Professor*, 178; memo, G. Hausman to Frank Stanton, 7 Mar. 1955, copy in House TV Inquiry hearings, box 757.

91. Jay Walz, "FCC Members Accepted Gifts, House Group Told," *New York Times*, 23 Jan. 1958, 14; U.S. House, Commerce Committee, Special Subcommittee on Legislative Oversight, *Investigation of Regulatory Commissions*, hearings, 86th Congress, 2nd sess., 1958, 268, 2350, 2367–68. The president also received a complimentary RCA color receiver. HEW notation, 12/18, attached to memo, James Hagerty to Eisenhower, 10 Dec. 1953, Eisenhower Papers, OF250-A/914.

92. Quoted in *Broadcasting*, 7 Mar. 1960, 61; Frank T. Colon, "The Court and the Commissions: Ex Parte Contacts and the Sangamon Valley Case," *Federal Communications Bar Journal*, 19 (1964–65): 77–78. Doerfer defended his conduct in "Legislation Affecting the Federal Regulatory Process," ibid. 17 (1959): 7. See also Bernard Schwartz, *The Professor*, 173–75, 177.

93. Memo to files, Herbert M. Wachtell, 6 Feb. 1958, Peter Mack Papers, box 30. See also U.S. House, Commerce Committee, *Investigation of Regulatory Commissions*, hearings, 557, 560, 1070ff.

94. David A. Frier, *Conflict of Interest in the Eisenhower Administration* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1969), 151, 160–73; Victor G. Rosenblum, "How to Get into TV: The Federal Communications Commission and Miami's Channel 10," in *The Uses of Power; 7 Cases in American Politics*, 174–228 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962); Walter Goodman, *All Honorable Men: Corruption and Compromise in American Life* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1963), 162–75; U.S. Senate, Committee on Commerce, *Appointments to the Regulatory Agencies; The Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Trade Commission (1949–1974)*, Committee Print, 94th Congress, 2nd sess., 1976, 69–73, 99–110. Mack's appointment had been recommended by Florida's leading Democrats. Charles Willis to Spessard Holland, 25 Apr. 1955, Eisenhower Papers, GF41-A/383, memo, Robert Gray to Sherman Adams, 12 Feb. 1958, ibid., OF16/188.

95. Edwin C. Johnson, "Carrying Coals to Newcastle," address before the Federal Communications Bar Association, 12 Jan. 1950, 2, copy in Du Mont Records, box 105. See also Carl J. Friedrich and Evelyn Sternberg, "Congress and the Control of Radio-Broadcasting," *American Political Science Review* 37

(Oct. 1943): 797–98; James O. Freedman, *Crisis and Legitimacy; The Administrative Process and American Government* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 261; Marver H. Bernstein, *Regulating Business by Independent Commission* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 284–85. The Roosevelt White House was much more likely to intervene in commission deliberations. See, for example, Robert E. Cushman, *The Independent Regulatory Commissions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), 682.

96. Press release, Office of Oren Harris, 25 Jan. 1958, Harris Papers, group 12, file 10-4-28; "30 Members of 85th Congress Have Radio-Television Tie-Ins," *Broadcasting*, 7 Jan. 1957, 46, 48.

97. See comments by James Lawrence Fly in Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, *Broadcasting and Government Regulation in a Free Society*, occasional paper, 1959, 14, and John Fischer, "How to Keep Congress Honest," *Harper's*, May 1958, 15–16. Changes in campaign finance regulations in the 1970s permitted corporations to create Political Action Committees (PACs). This created a corporate gangsterism and gave nonconstituents financial leverage over congressional members that was unimaginable in the 1950s.

98. Page Belcher of Oklahoma appeared in both radio and television reports. See Belcher to Merlin Ferguson, 17 Mar. 1959, Belcher to Lawson Taylor, 7 Mar. 1959, Belcher Papers, box 49.

99. Harry Tenenbaum to Symington, 15 July 1955, 26 Sept. 1955, 6 July 1956, telegram, Symington to Richard A. Mack, 4 Oct. 1955. Symington spoke to Mack and Bartley; his secretary spoke with another commissioner. Catherine Blanton Roberts to Sidney Salomon, 30 Aug. 1956, Symington to Tenenbaum, 11 Feb. 1957, all in Symington Papers, box 46.

100. The correspondence in Symington's papers, cited in n. 99 above, suggests that the senator was being less than truthful about the extent of his lobbying. "Salomon Discussed Signal Hill TV Problem with Symington," *St. Louis Post–Dispatch*, 15 June 1958, clipping in Hennings Papers, folder 6277. Commissioners Hyde and Bartley both later recalled other examples of congressional interference in their deliberations. Hyde interview, 5 Dec. 1972, Bartley interview, 6 Dec. 1972, tapes in Sterling Quinlan Papers, boxes 12 and 13, respectively.

101. Rosenblum, "How to Get into TV," 207–13, 220, 227; Bernard Schwartz, *The Professor*, 195–97, 201, 235–36.

102. Autry to Johnson, 24 Sept. 1945, Johnson to Autry, 26 Sept. 1945, Dorothy Territo Staff Files, Johnson Papers, box 1.

103. Transcript, *See It Now*, 14 June 1955, copy in Emanuel Celler Papers, box 487. "Pay-As-You-See-TV," *Newsweek*, 28 Feb. 1955, 71–72, 74. Some disinterested observers shared Stanton's concerns. See Terrence O'Flaherty, "Pay Up and Shut Up?" *San Francisco Chronicle*, 26 July 1957.

104. Bookman, "Regulation by Elephant," 232. See J. C. Richdale Jr. to Page Belcher, Belcher Papers, box 29.

105. Mr. and Mrs. T. V. Nichols to Thomas C. Hennings, 2 Mar. 1958, Hennings Papers, folder 3827. See also Harold L. Walker to John F. Kennedy, 27 July 1957, Pre-Presidential Papers, box 682; Mrs. Fred Braun to [Warren Magnuson], 13 Feb. 1957, H. E. Goodwin to Magnuson, 2 Feb. 1958, Senate TV Inquiry, box 725. On the antipay TV campaigns by North Carolina and New Mexico stations, see *Broadcasting*, 3 Feb. 1958, 78; Bob Van Driel to Dennis Chavez [29 Jan. 1958], Chavez Papers, box 150. A surly McDonald contended that the networks orchestrated the campaign. See press release, Zenith Corp., 20 Feb. 1958, copy in Belcher Papers, box 29.

106. Emanuel Celler, "Pay-TV: Its Danger to Free Television," address before Association of Advertising Men and Women, 1 Oct. 1957, Celler Papers, box 487; James L. Baughman, *Television's Guardians: The Federal Communications Commission and the Politics of Programming* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 39–40.

107. Jack Gould, "Nothing Doing," *New York Times*, 2 Mar. 1958.

108. Memo, Keeton Arnett to Allen B. Du Mont, 30 Sept. 1954, Du Mont Papers, box 28; *Television Digest*, 31 July 1954, 2; "Bricker Prepares Network Inquiry," *New York Times*, 7 Aug. 1954; Bricker, *The Network Monopoly*, Commerce Committee Print, 84th Congress, 2nd sess., 1956.

109. Roscoe L. Barrow, "Network Broadcasting—The Report of the FCC Network Study Staff," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 22 (Autumn 1957): 611–25; "Barrow Report Urges Tough Curbs," *Broadcasting*, 7 Oct. 1957, 31–36, 105; FCC, *Annual Report* (1955), 107; U.S. Congress, House Commerce Committee, *Network Broadcasting*, House Report. No. 1297, 85th Congress, 2nd sess., 27 Jan. 1958; CBS, *Annual Report, 1957*, 11.

110. Magnuson introduction to U.S. Senate, Commerce Committee, *Television Network Regulation and the UHF Problem*, memo by Harry M. Plotkin, special counsel, 84th Congress, 1st sess., 1 Feb. 1955, iii; Magnuson to George C. McConnaughey, 23 July 1956, Senate TV Inquiry, box 687; Langman, "Television: Magnuson Committee Report," 39–40.

111. Celler, "A Layman Looks at Television," statement before the Academy on Television Arts and Sciences, 24 Sept. 1957, Celler Papers, box 487. See also his opening statement in House *Monopoly Problems*, 3107.

112. House *Monopoly Problems*, 3505; Senate *TV Inquiry* hearings, 405–23; memo, Ashbrook R. Bryant to Newton N. Minow, 19 June 1962, Minow Papers, box 26. The Justice Department's antitrust inquiry, which began in 1953, accelerated in 1956. See address, Victor R. Hansen, 18 Apr. 1957, copy in Celler Papers, box 240.

113. Stanton to Paul Lazarsfeld, 24 Dec. 1956, Lazarsfeld Papers, box 3A. Even before the 1956 hearings, network executives assured members of Congress that affiliates in smaller markets, less desired by advertisers, would nonetheless receive network programs. Robert W. Sarnoff to Paul H. Douglas, 13 Oct. 1955, Douglas Papers, box 277.

114. Sarnoff, "Networks: America's Electronic Highways," address, Los Angeles Rotary Club, 22 Mar. 1957, Thomas E. Ervin to Emanuel Celler, 27 Aug. 1956, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 765.

115. Senate, Commerce Committee, *Television Network Regulation and the UHF Problem*, 28.

116. House *Monopoly Problems*, 4729; Celler, "Antitrust Problems in the Television Broadcasting Industry," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 22 (Autumn 1957): 549–71.

Chapter 5. "Mr. Spectacular"

Epigraphs: Sylvester L. Weaver Jr., speech to Chicago Economic Club, 15 June 1953, Hedges Collection. Robert Lewis Shayon, "A Word for Weaver," *Saturday Review*, 13 Oct. 1956, 31.

1. Henry Jaffe quoted in Max Wilk, *The Golden Age of Television: Notes from the Survivors* (New York: Delta, 1976), 118. A 1960 NBC production, with Mary Martin and Cyril Ritchard, who played Captain Hook in the 1955 and 1956 telecasts, was produced as a video. (The tape is no longer in stock from the video maker.)

2. "Moving Up to a Tough Spot," *Business Week*, 12 Dec. 1953, 65. See also "NBC Overtaking CBS Sales Promotion Runaway; Redtape Getting Scissors," *Variety*, 7 July 1937, 28.

3. Niles Trammell, "Your Network—Present and Future," address, NBC convention—Affiliates, [White Sulphur Springs, W. Va., 7 Sept. 1949], in NBC Papers, LC, folder 924; Sally Bedell Smith, *In All His Glory: The Life of William S. Paley* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 258–66; William S. Paley, *As It Happened: A Memoir* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1979), 191–201.

4. Irving Bernstein, *The Economics of Television Film Production and Distribution* (Hollywood: Screen Actors Guild, 1960), 24; RCA, *Annual Report*, 1954; "R.C.A.'s Television," *Fortune*, Sept. 1948, 196.

5. See *Los Angeles Examiner* obituaries for Weaver's mother, 18 Mar. 1939, and father, 13 Sept. 1958, Hearst Collection.

6. Pat Weaver, *The Best Seat in the House; The Golden Years of Radio and Television* (New York: Knopf, 1994), chaps. 2–10; Thomas Whiteside, "The Communicator," *New Yorker*, 23 Oct. 1954, 44, 46, 48ff; "Pat's Got an Idea," *Media Decisions* (May 1968): 30; transcript of Weaver UCLA lecture, 1 Apr. 1987, 22–23, Weaver Papers, box 28; Weaver to Nelson A. Rockefeller, [13 Feb. 1947], Rockefeller Papers, Record Group 4, box 260; "His TV Dream: Bigness and Uplift," *Newsweek*, 18 July 1955, 50–52.

7. Cone to Weaver, 8 July 1949, Robinson to Trammell, 8 July 1949, in Weaver Papers, box 1, Stanton to Weaver, ibid., box 3.

8. Weaver, *Best Seat*, 183. Reuven Frank of NBC News, no fan of Weaver, claimed NBC had offered the position first to Andrew Heiskell, publisher of *Life* magazine. See Frank, *Out of Thin Air: The Brief Wonderful Life of Net-*

work News (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 27. On Sarnoff's disdain for broadcasting, see his comments to David Lilienthal, *Venturesome Years, 1950–1955*, vol. 3 of *The Journals of David E. Lilienthal* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 393–94.

9. Weaver, [memo #1], 10 Sept. 1949, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 1250, and memo to executive group, Nov. 1949, ibid., folder 1251.

10. Weaver, memo to executive group, Nov. 1949.

11. Whiteside, "The Communicator," 16 Oct. and 23 Oct. 1954.

12. *Business Week*, 27 June 1964, 140.

13. Michele Hilmes, *Radio Voices; American Broadcasting, 1922–1952* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 275.

14. On McConnell, see David Lilienthal's comments in *Venturesome Years*, 131–32. The best analysis of Weaver is Vance Kepley Jr., "The Weaver Years at NBC," *Wide Angle* 12 (Apr. 1990): 46–63.

15. Ace to Groucho Marx, 13 July [1952], Marx Papers, box 1.

16. Memo, Weaver to Frank White, 16 Mar. 1953, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 176.

17. Weaver's lack of enthusiasm for Hoppy is suggested in a memo, Russ Johnston to Weaver, 22 Dec. 1949, Boyd Papers, box 96.

18. "Jack Webb Is Creator, Star, and Producer of 'Dragnet,'" *Illinois State Journal Register*, 27 Sept. 1953; David Bianculli, "'Dragnet' Is 50—and That's a Fact," *New York Daily News*, 3 Jan. 2002; David Marc and Robert J. Thompson, *Prime Time, Prime Mover* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 132–35; Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh, *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows, 1946–Present*, 6th ed. (New York: Ballantine, 1995), 596; Groucho Marx and Hector Arce, *The Secret Word Is Groucho* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), 18–54.

19. Weaver, *Best Seat*, 172–75; minutes of NBC Board of Directors, 5 Apr. 1951, in NBC Papers, LC, Folder 877, and report from the board of directors meeting, 5 Apr. 1951, ibid., folder 878; Berle obituary, *New York Times*, 28 Mar. 2002.

20. "NBC the Winnah—at $3,000,000—for Groucho's 8-Year Service," *Variety*, 31 May 1950, 19, 32; Marx and Arce, *Groucho*, 336–37; William Robert Faith, *Bob Hope: A Life in Comedy* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1981), 229; Herbert G. Goldman, *Banjo Eyes: Eddie Cantor and the Birth of Modern Stardom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 259; minutes of NBC Board of Directors, 1 Dec. 1950 and 5 Jan. 1951, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 877.

21. Near the end of the Weaver regime, in March 1956, 90 percent of NBC's total schedule was telecast live, compared to the three-network average of 76.8 percent. *Broadcasting Yearbook, 1963* (Washington, D.C.: Broadcasting Magazine, 1963), 20. On arguments at NBC for live telecasts before Weaver,

see Kenneth Michael Mashon, "NBC, J. Walter Thompson, and the Evolution of Prime-Time Television Programming and Sponsorship, 1946–1958" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1995), 86ff.

22. Memo, Sylvester L. Weaver Jr. to Joseph H. McConnell, 21 Sept. 1951, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 586; Weaver, address, "Television as a Sales Medium," Brewers' Convention, Los Angeles, 3 May 1950, ibid., folder 1252.

23. Script, "Kraft Television Theatre," 6 Oct. 1954, NBC Master Books.

24. Weaver, memo to executive group, Nov. 1949.

25. Jon Krampner, *The Man in the Shadows; Fred Coe and the Golden Age of Television* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), chap. 7; Andy Boehm, "Where'd You Get Them 'Peepers'?" *Madison (Wisc.) Isthmus*, 8 Sept. 1989, 39.

26. Notes of interview with Berle, ca. 1958–59, Mayer Papers, box 63; Hal Humphrey, "Cantor Has His Own Network," *Los Angeles Mirror News*, 2 Feb. 1955; Goldman, *Banjo Eyes*, 280, 285–88; Walter Ames, "O'Connor Finds TV a Tough Taskmaster," *Los Angeles Times*, 3 May 1953.

27. "Memo of Points Discussed Respecting Proposed Arrangement between NBC and William Boyd," 30 Nov. 1949; Boyd to Carlton B. Smith, 25 July 1950, both in Boyd Papers, box 95; William Boyd and NBC, 31 Oct. 1950, ibid., box 76.

28. See list of stations broadcasting Hopalong program, 12 Jan. 1950, copy in Boyd Papers, box 91.

29. Weaver, internal memo, 2 Sept. 1952, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 1259. See also Weaver, [memo #1], 10 Sept. 1949, ibid., folder 1250; Weaver, statement of principles and objectives to top management, 12 Nov. 1951, ibid., folder 1256; memo, Weaver to Charles R. Denny, 3 Oct. 1949, ibid., folder 586; memo, George M. Burbach to Joseph Pulitzer II, 5 June 1950, Pulitzer Papers, box 112. In 1956, National Telefilm Associates, in alliance with 20th Century Fox, started a film network. It failed to become a threat to the networks. See "Nation's Fourth TV Net Sets Up with Films," *Business Week*, 22 Sept. 1956, 52 and "More Films for TV," ibid., 10 Nov. 1956, 59. Hal Roach Jr. also considered establishing such a network. See "Roach Seeks All-Telefilm Web," *Variety*, 7 Apr. 1954, 39, 40.

30. ATT, "Cities Interconnected to the Bell System Television Network," [late 1954], Senate TV Inquiry, box 691.

31. "Proposals for Increasing NBC Service to Optional Affiliates, Aug. 20, 1954," exhibit 2, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 938.

32. Memo, Weaver to Denny, 3 Oct. 1949; Weaver, memo to executive group, Nov. 1949.

33. Weaver, "Triumph and Tragedy in Television," n.d. [early 1970s], 18, Weaver Papers, box 27; memo, Weaver to Denny, 3 Oct. 1949.

34. John Houseman, "Show Business," *New York Star*, 15 Nov. 1948, clipping in Houseman Papers, box 2; Hortense Powdermaker, *Hollywood, the Dream*

Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-Makers (Boston: Little, Brown, 1950), 42; memo, Weaver to Denny, 3 Oct. 1949; minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 22 Dec. 1952, 3, ibid., folder 835.

35. Weaver, memo to executive group, Nov. 1949. See also his testimony U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, *Juvenile Delinquency*, 87th Congress, 1st sess., 1961, 2190–191.

36. Weaver, remarks, NBC TV Affiliates Meeting, 18 Nov. 1953, copy in Hedges Collection, folder 179D; "Reply by Sylvester L. Weaver Jr. to Questions Submitted by Martin Mayer in his Letter of June 19," [1956], in NBC Papers, WHS, box 126. On the pretelevision film audience, see Leo A. Handel, *Hollywood Looks at Its Audience; A Report on Film Audience Research* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1950), chap. 7; Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "Audience Research in the Movie Field," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 254 (Nov. 1947): 160–68.

37. Emphasis added. Weaver speech, Washington, D.C., 15 Nov. 1967, 4, Weaver Papers, box 27.

38. Weaver, memo to executive group, Nov. 1949.

39. John Gunther, *Inside U.S.A.* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1947), 549–50. See also E. B. White, *Essays of E. B. White* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 118, 126; Lynn Garafola, "Toward an American Dance: Dance in the City," 157, 165; Richard Gilman, "The City and the Theater," 189, 195–97, 201–2; John Rockwell, "New York's Music,"213–14, 219–22, 228–29, all in *New York; Culture Capital of the World, 1940–1965*, ed. Leonard Wallock (New York: Rizzoli, 1988).

40. Kevin Starr, *Material Dreams: Southern California through the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 163–68, 319, 322, 331; "Brightness in the Air," *Time*, 18 Dec. 1964, 46. On Los Angeles's cultural scene since midcentury, see John Rockwell, "Los Angeles Becomes A Base for Cutting-Edge Performance," *Los Angeles Times*, 12 Jan. 2003.

41. *Advertising Age*, 15 Nov. 1954, 75.

42. Script, *Admiral Broadway Review*, 27 May 1949, Liebman Papers, box 45.

43. Weaver, comments to NBC Top Management, 30 Sept. 1949, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 1250.

44. Minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 11 Sept. 1950, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 839; report for the NBC Board of Directors' meeting, 4 May 1951, ibid., folder 878; Berle and Frankel, *Berle*, 347; Walter Ames, "Berle Tops List of TV Shows Back This Week," *Los Angeles Times*, 25 Sept. 1955; Weaver, *Best Seat*, 261; Jon Krampner, *Man in the Shadows*, 32; "NBC to Buy Hudson Theatre, N.Y.," *Variety*, 7 June 1950, 29; memo to file, G. S. Eyssell, 16 July 1952, Rockefeller Papers, Record Group 4, box 216. On the new Radio City negotiations, see memo, E. E. Anderson to ABC Directors, 12 Nov. 1946, Hinckley Papers, box 85.

45. Weaver, remarks to Advertising Women's Club, 15 Mar. 1950, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 1252.

46. Weaver, *Best Seat*, 183–84. The A.C. Nielsen ratings were reprinted in Brooks and Marsh, *Complete Directory to Prime Time*, app. 3. The Los Angeles ratings, by the Hooper service, were noted in Minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 28 Jan. 1952, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 835.

47. "NBC's 'Rotating Comic' Formula Becomes Permanent Policy for TV," *Variety*, 26 July 1950, 34; review of *Colgate Variety Hour*, *Variety*, 27 Sept. 1950, 31; Walter Ames, "Wynn, Durante, Thomas Sign for NBC 'Laughtime,'" *Los Angeles Times*, 21 Sept. 1950; Robert Strauss, "The Devil Made Him Do It," ibid., 26 Feb. 1995; John Crosby, "New Idea," *New York Herald Tribune*, 24 Jan. 1951; Shawn Levy, *King of Comedy: The Life and Art of Jerry Lewis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 138; Faith, *Bob Hope*, 213, 220; memo, Fred Wile Jr. to Joseph H. McConnell, 8 May 1951, NBC Papers, WHS, box 115, memos, Robert W. McFadyen to Weaver, 2 Nov. 1950 and 9 Nov. 1950, ibid., box 593; Weaver, *Best Seat*, 212–13, 215–17, 219–21, and address to NBC Convention—Affiliates, [9 Sept. 1949].

48. Transcript of *Your Show of Shows*, 24 Feb. 1951, 2, NBC Master Books; Ted Sennett, *Your Show of Shows* (New York: Collier Books, 1977), 7–13, 18–20, and chap. 8; Sid Caesar and Bill Davidson, *Where Have I Been? An Autobiography* (New York: Crown, 1982), 58, 84–90, 95–97; FCC, *Reports* 43 (1950), 475–76; Weaver, *Best Seat in the House*, 193–96; "CBS Deal for Garden Sports Seen Thrust at NBC's Sat. Night Ratings," *Variety*, 19 Apr. 1950, 31; Weaver, "Blood, Sweat and Cheers," ibid., 26 July 1950, 39; Philip Hamburger, "Funny People," *New Yorker*, 27 May 1950, 92; James L. Kilgallen, "Sid Caesar Will Do Own Show—Without Imogene," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 22 Aug. 1954; "Court Sees TV Dividing Line in Burlesque on Film Plays," ibid., 10 Dec. 1955, Hearst Collection. See also Gilbert Seldes's essay on Caesar and Coca, in *The Public Arts* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), 147–52. For a contemporary tribute to Caesar by a fellow comic, see Steve Allen, *The Funny Men* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), 105–18.

49. Caesar and Davidson, *Where Have I Been?* 89–90.

50. Memo, Weaver to Joseph H. McConnell, 12 Nov. 1951, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 586. See also memo, Weaver to Frank White, 16 Mar. 1953, ibid., folder 176; Weaver, *Best Seat*, 164; Sylvester L. Weaver, "Blood, Sweat, and Cheers," 39; Weaver, "Television 1953: The Case for the Networks," *Television Magazine* (Jan. 1953): 17.

51. Report for the [NBC] Board of Directors' meeting, 7 Oct. 1949, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 882.

52. Memo, Weaver to Frank White, 16 Mar. 1953. As Mashon notes, "NBC," 131, some within NBC had been calling for the network to produce more of its programming before Weaver arrived.

53. Weaver, address, NBC Convention—Affiliates, [9 Sept. 1949], in NBC Papers, LC, folder 1250. Crosby, in his 1948 *Atlantic* article, had used a similar analogy. See Crosby, "Radio," 24. The magazine concept was hardly as revolutionary as Weaver and some of those who profiled him seemed to think. The advertising agent William Benton had proposed the concept to NBC in 1933. NBC Radio, Michele Hilmes notes, had aired a popular women's program in the 1940s that followed the magazine format. Hilmes, *Radio Voices*, 277–87; Cynthia B. Meyers, "From Radio Ad Man to Radio Reformer: Senator William Benton and Corporate Liberal Discourses on Radio, 1930–1952," paper, the Radio Conference, 29 July 2003, University of Wisconsin–Madison.

54. Memo, Weaver to McConnell, 12 Nov. 1951.

55. Weaver, speech to Chicago Executives Club, 29 Apr. 1955, Weaver Papers, box 27; NBC Television, "Television Today: Its Impact on People and Products," (1951), 60–61; press release, NBC Television, 11 June 1951, copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 188; "NBC Magazine Concept for TV," *Variety*, 18 Feb. 1953, 27.

56. [Weaver], "Outline—TV Circulation Plan," [1953], in NBC Papers, LC, folder 176; Weaver, opening remarks, NBC TV Affiliates Meeting, 31 Aug. 1954, ibid., folder 938. "Moving Up to a Tough Spot," *Business Week*, 12 Dec. 1953, 66. Weaver's 1953 document included many long, supportive quotes from agency executives. See also Richard Pinkham, "The Magazine Concept in *Today*, *Home*, *Tonight*," remarks, NBC TV Affiliates Meeting, Chicago, 31 Aug. 1954, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 938. See also "Agency-Produced Colgate Show May Set Pace for Lower Cost," *Advertising Age*, 26 Apr. 1954, 44.

57. Weaver, comments to NBC Top Management, 30 Sept. 1949; "NBC Will Burst into Color This Fall," *Business Week* (21 Aug. 1954), 41.

58. Memo, Weaver to McConnell, 12 Nov. 1951. See also memo, J. K. Herbert to Frank White, 11 Apr. 1953, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 176.

59. Minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 9 June 1952, 4, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 835.

60. "TV Regulars to Get Evicted as Networks Switch Programs," *Advertising Age*, 19 Apr. 1954, 1, 80. See also Maurine Christopher, "Weaver Defends Sponsor Shifts for Keeping Video Out of Radio Rut," ibid., 3 May 1954, 2, 146; Christopher, "Color Spectaculars Make Top News in TV," ibid., 15 Nov. 1954, 74.

61. NBC Master Books, Jan. 11–15, 1951. *Today* was also a response to CBS's head start in programming later in the morning and afternoon. See Weaver to David Sarnoff, 30 Jan. 1953, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 873. Hilmes, *Radio Voices*, notes that *Today* had its radio antecedents.

62. "*Today:* Future Pattern of TV Advertising?" *Television Magazine* (Oct. 1952): 18–19; *Variety*, 18 Feb. 1953, 27.

63. George Rosen, "Garroway 'Today' Off to Boff Start as Revolutionary News Concept," *Variety*, 16 Jan. 1952, 29; *Variety*, 21 Jan. 1953, 38; Robert Metz, *The Today Show* (Chicago: Playboy Press, 1977), 36–39; minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 14 Jan. 1952 and 28 Jan. 1952, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 835.

64. See April and May 1954 program logs for KNBH, Los Angeles, WTMJ, Milwaukee, and KDAF, Kansas City, in Senate Delinquency Inquiry, Juvenile Delinquency Hearings Records, box 199. NBC's San Francisco affiliate, KRON, aired one hour of *Today* from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 Jan. 1955.

65. Don Herbert, remarks, TV Affiliates' Committee Meeting, Princeton, N.J., 26 May 1953, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 940. Total advertising sales were reported running between 25 and 30 percent of the potential. Minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 13 Apr. 1953, ibid., folder 833. See also minutes, 6 May 1953, ibid., and 22 Dec. 1952, ibid., folder 835.

66. Judith B. Dolgins, "Aiming High and Making Good," *Television Magazine* (Oct. 1961): 55; Metz, chaps. 4–7; minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 22 June 1953, 4, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 833; Jack Gould, "Coronation Marks Birth of World TV," *New York Times*, 3 June 1953, and "Coronation on Video," ibid., 7 June 1953.

67. Pete Martin, "The Blonde Bombshell," *Saturday Evening Post*, 30 June 1951, 129.

68. Review of *Broadway Open House*, *Variety*, 31 May 1950, 24; "Dagmar and Beer," *Advertising Age*, 15 Nov. 1954, 64; "Steve Allen: Clock Stopper," *Newsweek*, 29 Nov. 1954, 60, 62; Ben Alba, *Inventing Late Night: Steve Allen and the Original Tonight Show* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2005), 51, 57, 59–60; Steve Allen, *Hi-Ho, Steverino! My Adventures in the Wonderful Wacky World of TV* (Ft. Lee, N.J.: Barricade Books, 1992), chap. 2.

69. Memo, Ted Mills to Sylvester L. Weaver Jr., 11 Sept. 1953, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 377. If critics deemed *Home* too fixated on consumption, local TV productions for women were worse. See, for example, David Weinstein, "Women's Shows and the Selling of Television to Washington, D.C.," *Washington History* 11 (Spring/Summer 1999): 4–23.

70. Inger L. Stole, "There Is No Place Like *Home:* NBC's Search for a Daytime Audience, 1954–1957," *Communication Review* 2 (1997): 140–55; "Home," 7 Oct. 1954, NBC Master Books, LC; memo, Miriam Hoffmeier to All Those Concerned, 15 Oct. 1954, Weaver Papers, box 5. See also Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 82–84; Weaver, *Best Seat*, 250–51.

71. Response to Television Questionnaire, Network Affiliates, KSTP-TV, chap. 5, St. Paul, n.d., Senate TV Inquiry, box 714; John H. Mitchell to all UA branch and district managers, 4 Jan. 1948, United Artists Papers, Record

Group 2, box 52. Some of the old chestnuts offered by different stations are listed in memo, William Lacey to Richard Salant, 22 Sept. 1955, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 756; Victor F. Campbell to Robert C. Hendrickson, 23 July 1954, Senate Delinquency Inquiry, box 110; Don O. Hays to Hendrickson, 22 June 1954, ibid. In 1956, NBC's Providence station aired old feature films instead of *Tonight*. Response to Television Questionnaire, Network Affiliates, WJAR-TV, chap. 10, Providence, n.d., Senate Delinquency Inquiry, box 110. See also comments of Lawrence H. Rogers, president of WSAZ, 22 Apr. 1958, Docket 12285, hearings, 2816, 2321–22, FCC Records, GSA, and Sidney R. Lane, "Films as a Source for Programming," *Television Magazine* (May 1946): 14, 24.

72. Max Liebman, "Variety and Television," in *Television in the Making*, ed. Paul Rotham, 77–82 (New York: Hastings House, 1956); Mike Dann to Edwin Reynolds, 16 May 1955, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 377; NBC-TV, "The Liebman Sunday Night Spectaculars," promotional booklet, June 1954, 7, ibid. Weaver later claimed to have developed the longer form of the spectacular on radio in 1933. See his testimony, 29 June 1961, Docket 12782, vol. 16, *Proc.*, 43:6530, FCC Records, NA.

73. "Agency-Produced Colgate Show May Set Pace for Lower Cost," *Advertising Age*, 26 Apr. 1954, 44; "Blueprint for 'Spectaculars,'" *Variety*, 17 Mar. 1954, 1, 35; Weaver, *Best Seat*, 253–55.

74. Weaver, "Television and Modern Selling," 28 June 1955, 11, Weaver Papers, box 27; Weaver to William Lewis, 2 Apr. 1956, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 126; Weaver, "Why Networks Should Control TV Programs," *Printers' Ink* (17 June 1955), 36.

75. Weaver, "Memo on the Spectaculars," 8 Mar. 1954; telegram, Fred Wile Jr. to Fred Coe, 2 Nov. 1954; memos, Wile to Weaver, 18 Feb. 1954; Thomas Sarnoff to Robert Sarnoff, 31 Mar. 1954; Fred Wile Jr. to Thomas A. McAvity, 18 Feb. 1954; all in Weaver Papers, box 5; Weaver, address to [NBC] affiliates, 10, ibid., box 27; Oscar Godbout, "TV Film Industry Thrives on Coast," *New York Times*, 2 Jan. 1956; Wile to Dore Schary, 28 Feb. 1955, Schary Papers, box 19.

76. Maurine Christopher, "Weaver Defends Sponsor Shifts for Keeping Video Out of Radio's Rut," *Advertising Age*, 3 May 1954, 146; "TV Regulars to Get Evicted as Networks Switch Programs," ibid., 19 Apr. 1954, 1, 80. See also Maurine Christopher, "Color Spectaculars Make Top News in TV," ibid., 15 Nov. 1954, 74.

77. Telegram, Michael Dann to Clarence Hatch, 18 Apr. 1955, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 377. According to *Variety*, 68 percent of all network programs—daytime and evening—failed between the 1952–53 and 1955–56 seasons. "Friday Meeting with Management Committee," n.d., Radio Television Department, Thompson Papers, box 2, folder 15. On agency skepticism to-

ward the spectacular's cost effectiveness, see "Agency-Produced Colgate Show May Set Pace for Lower Cost," *Advertising Age*, 26 Apr. 1954, 44.

78. George Rosen, "Death of the Television Star," *Variety*, 31 Mar. 1954, 1, 46.

79. Minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 11 May 1953, 3–4, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 833; "C.B.S. Steals the Show," *Fortune*, July 1953, 79; memos, Joseph Pulitzer II to Harold Grams, 20 Feb. 1953, Joseph Pulitzer Jr. to Pulitzer, 20 Mar. 1953, Pulitzer Papers, box 112.

80. Press release, 23 Apr. 1954, Hedges Collection.

81. Hal Humphrey, "Little Man, Big Job," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 23 Feb. 1955; "Pat Weaver's Dramatic Plan," *Variety*, 25 Oct. 1950.

82. Richard Austin Smith, "TV: The Coming Showdown," *Fortune*, Sept. 1954, 139, 164.

83. Minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 13 Nov. 1950, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 839.

84. Kepley, "The Weaver Years," 52–54; Irene Corbally Kuhn, "T.V.'s Pat and Bob," *American Mercury* 80 (Feb. 1955): 28.

85. Weaver, remarks, NBC TV Affiliates Meeting, 18 Nov. 1953, Hedges Collection, folder 179D. See also *Broadcasting*, 7 June 1954, 5; NBC Television Affiliates, Executive Committee Report, Meeting of Apr. 8–9, 1954, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 938.

86. *Variety*, 22 June 1955, 1.

87. Jack Gould, "Creative Spark," *New York Times*, 21 Nov. 1954; Crosby, "Radio," 24, 25. See also Gould, "The Low State of TV," *New York Times*, 19 Oct. 1952; Faith, *Bob Hope*, 207.

88. Maurine Christopher, "Weaver Defends Sponsor Shifts for Keeping Video Out of Radio's Rut," *Advertising Age*, 3 May 1954, 2. See also "Television: The New Cyclops," *Business Week*, 10 Mar. 1956, 80.

89. George Rosen, "TV's 'Blues in the Night,'" *Variety*, 6 Oct. 1954, 23.

90. Whiteside, "The Communicator," 16 Oct. 1954, 54.

91. Weaver, speech to NBC-TV Affiliates, 9 Dec. 1955, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 948, and opening remarks, NBC-TV Affiliates Meeting, 31 Aug. 1954, ibid., folder 938.

92. "Weaver Scans the Way Ahead," *Broadcasting*, 28 Feb. 1955, 40.

93. Robert W. Sarnoff, "Color Television at NBC," remarks, TV Affiliates Meeting, 31 Aug. 1954, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 938; Janet Kern, *Chicago American*, 12 Oct. 1956, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 143. See also Sydney H. Eiges, "NBC-TV Publicity," remarks, TV Affiliates Meeting, Chicago, 31 Aug. 1954, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 938.

94. Weaver, speech to NBC-TV Affiliates, 9 Dec. 1955, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 948; Weaver, memo to executive group, November 1949, ibid., folder 1251. See also Weaver, address, NBC Convention—Affiliates, [9 Sept.

1949], ibid., folder 1250. In 1952, for example, *Life* claimed it reached twice as many U.S. homes (25.6 million) over a thirteen-week period compared to 11.9 million per week. *JWT News*, 5 May 1952, 2, Thompson Papers. At least one advertising agency analysis had wondered if the weekly or daily sponsorship would be the best pattern for TV. See Garth Montgomery, "Growth of a Salesman," [21 Oct. 1949], copy in Thomas D'A. Brophy Papers, box 51. See also E. Lawrence Deckinger, "Conducting Research for TV Advertising," in *Television Advertising and Production Handbook*, ed. Irving Settel and Norman Glenn, 51–52 (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1953).

95. Martin Mayer, "Television's Lords of Creation, Part 1: Strategic Thinking at NBC," *Harper's*, Nov. 1956, 28. See also A. J. McGinness to Walter E. Myers, 1 Feb. 1956, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 126, and Sylvester L. Weaver, "The Maturity of the Advertiser," *Television Magazine* (Jan. 1956): 39.

96. Weaver, remarks, NBC TV Affiliates Meeting, 31 Aug. 1954, copy in Hedges Collection, folder 179F; Ruth Rosen, "Search for Yesterday," in *Watching Television*, ed. Todd Gitlin, 51 (New York: Pantheon, 1986); Crosby, "Radio," 28. Thurber's essay was reprinted in *Culture and Commitment, 1929–1945*, ed. Warren Susman, chap. 12 (New York: George Braziller, 1973).

97. Marya Mannes, *But Will It Sell?* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1964), 222; "Soap Opera," *Fortune*, Mar. 1946, 119–20, 122; John Crosby, "For Scholars Only," *New York Herald Tribune*, 26 Jan. 1951.

98. Advertest Research, "Study of Daytime Television," Dec. 1953, 22, copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 193; Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Harry F. Field, *The People Look at Radio* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1946), 49–53, 138; Martin Mayer, *Madison Avenue U.S.A.* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1958), 196.

99. Memo, Weaver to Jane Murray, 4 July 1955, reprinted in Frank Sturcken, *Live Television: The Golden Age of 1946–1958 in New York* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1990), 130–31.

100. Memo, Carl Lindemann Jr. to [McCleery et al.], 11 Oct. 1955, McCleery Papers, box 1. Of the 26 scripts in boxes 37 and 48 of the McCleery Papers, all but three carried the "live" notation on the file folders.

101. Memo on Matinee Theatre by McCleery [?], 12 Sept. 1955, McCleery Papers, box 1; "Drama Factory," *Time*, 20 Aug. 1956, 55–56; Seymour Korman, "McCleery's 5 Dramas a Week," *Chicago Tribune*, 4 Feb. 1956. *Time* ("Drama Factory," 55) estimated that 58.4 percent of the first 159 *Matinee Theatre* programs were "contemporary drama." See also McCleery's comments in Burton Rascoe, "The Good and Bad of 'Matinee Theatre,'" *Long Island Daily Press*, 21 Nov. 1955, clipping in McCleery Papers, box 1.

102. "Drama Factory," 55.

103. Jon Bruce, "How Daytime TV Can Change Your Life," *TV Radio Life* 33 (2 Mar. 1956), 46, clipping in McCleery Papers, box 1.

104. Terrence O'Flaherty, "Drama, Romance for Mother," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 31 Oct. 1955, clipping in McCleery Papers, box 1. See also Lucia Carter, "Now Housewife Has Intelligence!" *Chicago Sun-Times*, 14 Aug. 1955, and "The 'Heights' Stymie Video," ibid., 1 Dec. 1955, clippings in McCleery Papers, box 1.

105. Anthony La Camera, "First Matinee Theatre Show 'Sudsy,'" *Boston American*, 1 Nov. 1955, clipping in McCleery Papers, box 1. See also William Keogh, "'Matinee Theatre' Off to a Weak Start," *Providence Bulletin*, 1 Nov. 1955, in ibid., and "NBC-TV Gets Daytime Spec Bug," *Variety*, 2 Nov. 1955, 35. Far more enthusiastic was Allen Rich, "Listening Post and TV Review," *Valley Times*, 2 Nov. 1955, copy in McCleery Papers, box 1.

106. Stan Anderson, "Afternoon TV Offers Respite from Dull Soap Opera Fare," *Cleveland Press*, 17 Jan. 1956.

107. Weaver speech to [NBC] affiliates, 19 Oct. 1950, 5, Weaver Papers, box 27.

108. Whiteside, "The Communicator," 16 Oct. 1954, 40.

109. Weaver, speech to NBC-TV Affiliates, 9 Dec. 1955, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 948.

110. Edward Stanley, manager, public service programs, NBC, remarks, [summer] 1956, copy in William Elliott Papers, box 6. See also Weaver, speech to Chicago Economic Club, 15 June 1953, copy in Hedges Collection.

111. "Television: The New Cyclops," 80; Weaver, "Television's Destiny," magazine article manuscript, 1950, 10, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 1253.

112. Weaver, "Color Television and American Incentives," address, Detroit Economic Club, 31 Jan. 1955, Hedges Collection.

113. Weaver, "Television and the Intellectual," address, University of Chicago Management Conference, 26 Mar. 1955, Hedges Collection.

114. Sylvester Weaver, "TV Offers a New Renaissance," *Television Digest*, 22 Oct. 1955, supplement. Weaver also made this point while advocating the introduction of high culture into children's programs like *Howdy Doody*. See his Pittsburgh speech, 11 Apr. 1950, 10, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 1252.

115. Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), chap. 1, 68, 72, 85–104. See also Patricia C. Click, *The Spirit of the Times: Amusements in Nineteenth-Century Baltimore, Norfolk, and Richmond* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), chaps. 2–3, 100–104; Karen Ahlquist, *Democracy at the Opera: Music, Theater, and Culture in New York City, 1815–1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 157–59, 194–98.

116. Quoted in Anthony Holden, *Olivier* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988), 216, 220; Ace G. Pilkington, "Alas, Poor Hamlet: Film Popularizers and the Prince of Denmark," *Journal of the Wooden O Symposium* 1 (2000), 57, 59. See also John Cottrell, *Laurence Olivier* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975), 221–22, 229.

117. Replied Traubel, "To assert that art can be found at the Metropolitan Opera House but not in a night club is rank snobbery." She quit the Met. Helen Traubel, *St. Louis Woman* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1959), 241–42.

118. "Great Caesar's Ghost!" *Esquire*, May 1972, 140; Margaret McManus, "TV Opened the Door to Her Dream—The Met," *Washington Star*, 8 May 1955; Marya Mannes, "Enlightening the Jerks," *Reporter* 12 (24 Mar. 1955): 38.

119. Weaver, speech to NBC Affiliates, the Greenbriar, 19 Oct. 1950, NBC, LC, folder 1253. See also his remarks to Advertising Women's Club, 15 Mar. 1950, ibid., folder 1252, his address, Speech School Broadcast Conference, Chicago, Dec. 1950, ibid., folder 1253; and speech to NBC-TV Affiliates, 9 Dec. 1955, ibid., folder 948.

120. Script, *Four Star Revue*, 29 Nov. 1950, 53, Isaacs Papers, box 1; David Bakish, *Jimmy Durante: His Show Business Career* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1995), 133–35. See also Philip Hamburger, "Good News," *New Yorker*, 6 Jan. 1951, 66.

121. Script, *U.S. Royal Showcase*, 27 Apr. 1952, copy in Hiken Papers, box 36. For other operatic moments, see script, *U.S. Royal*, 29 June 1952, ibid., and script, *Colgate Comedy Hour*, 21 Dec. 1952, ibid., box 32.

122. Scripts, *Beginner's Luck*, 21 Nov. 1951, *After Dinner Story*, 30 Jan. 1952, and others in the McCleery Papers, box 68. Kate Smith also did a daytime program that included McCleery-produced playlets. Script, *Kate Smith Daytime Hour*, 10 Apr. 1952, NBC Master Books.

123. Memos, Fred Wile Jr. to All Unit Heads, Producers and Directors, 17 Jan. 1952; Weaver to NBC Staff Producers and Directors, 8 Feb. 1956, copies in Mayer Papers, box 98; Sylvester L. Weaver Jr., "Enlightenment through Exposure," *Television Magazine* (Jan. 1952): 30; House Investigation, 242; memos, Miriam Hoffmeier to All Those Concerned, 15 Oct. and 29 Nov. 1954, Weaver Papers, box 5. For a tendentious revisiting of this campaign, see Pamela Wilson, "NBC Television's 'Operation Frontal Lobes': Cultural Hegemony and Fifties' Program Planning," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 15 (Mar. 1995): 83–104.

124. Marya Mannes, *Who Owns the Air?* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1960), 5. See also Robert Saudek to Robert E. Dennison, 3 May 1957, copy in Seymour Papers, box 24.

125. Stan Anderson, "'The Magic Flute' Is Best Color TV Program So Far," *Cleveland Press*, 16 Jan. 1956.

126. W. J. Damm, "Minutes of NBC Television Affiliates Executive Committee Meeting," 26 Jan. 1956, KOMU Papers, folder 154; "'Richard III' Gets 19.1 Pct. Rating," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 14 Mar. 1956, Hearst Collection; Attachment, James J. Butler to Warren Magnuson, 23 Mar. 1956, Senate TV

Inquiry Records, box 700; Weaver, *Best Seat*, 223; editorial, "Olivier's Wooden O," *New York Times*, 13 July 1989.

127. Marie Torre, "Why Does TV Shun Richard Rodgers?" *New York Herald Tribune*, 19 Mar. 1958, *Herald Tribune* Morgue.

128. Weaver, reply to Mayer; Weaver, *Best Seat*, 55–56, 223.

129. Weaver, *Best Seat*, 55–56, 223.

130. Weaver, "TV Offers a New Renaissance."

131. Dwight Macdonald, *Against the American Grain* (New York: Random House, 1962), 12–13. A sympathetic reappraisal of Luce's cultural mission is Allan C. Carlson, "Luce, *Life*, and 'The American Way,'" *This World* no. 13 (Winter 1986): 56–74.

132. Macdonald, *Against the American Grain*, 3–78; Macdonald, *The Ford Foundation: The Men and the Millions* (New York: Reynal, 1956), 87–94; Paul R. Gorman, *Left Intellectuals and Popular Culture in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 158, 166–86; Barry D. Riccio, "Popular Culture and High Culture: Dwight Macdonald, His Critics, and the Ideal of Cultural Hierarchy in Modern America," *Journal of American Culture* 16 (Winter 1993): 7–18. See also Hannah Arendt, "Society and Culture," in *Culture for the Millions? Mass Media in Modern Society*, ed. Norman Jacobs, 49 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961). Macdonald did not oppose any attempt by television to present high culture. He praised some *Omnibus* programs and a 1959 *Playhouse 90* adaptation of Henry James's *Wings of the Dove*. See letter, Macdonald to *New York Times*, 9 Jan. 1959, copy in John Houseman Papers, box 8.

133. Patrick D. Hazard, "TV as Art: Some Reflections," in *TV as Art: Some Essays in Criticism*, ed. Hazard, 2 (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1966).

134. "In Pat Weaver's Own Wide World," *Life*, 18 July 1955, 108.

135. Robert Lewis Shayon, "A Word for Weaver," *Saturday Review*, 13 Oct. 1956, 31.

136. Jack Gould, "Weaver Out in N.B.C. Shake-Up; 4 Named to Top Executive Posts," *New York Times*, 8 Sept. 1956; John Crosby, "'54 in Retrospect," *Los Angeles Mirror News*, 4 Jan. 1955; Hal Humphrey, "No Writing No Show," ibid., 4 Jan. 1955; "Culture, Ratings and People," *Advertising Age*, 7 Nov. 1955, 79.

137. "The Coming Struggle for Power," *Advertising Age*, 28 Nov. 1955, 60; "Saturday Spectaculars," n.d. [1954–55], copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 377.

138. Rosen, "TV's 'Blues in the Night,'" 49.

139. Hal Humphrey, "TV Is Going Places," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 9 Mar. 1955.

140. Memos, Don Bishop to Ellis Moore, 7 Mar. 1955; Bob Daubenspeck to David Sarnoff et al., 31 Mar. 1955, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 377; "2-Hour

TV of 'Peter Pan,'" *Los Angeles Examiner*, 9 Mar. 1955, Hearst Collection; Wilk, *Golden Age*, 118.

141. John Crosby, "Repeat Performance," *New York Herald Tribune*, 13 Jan. 1956.

142. Robert Lewis Shayon, "A Word for Weaver," *Saturday Review*, 13 Oct. 1956, 31; press release, NBC, 9 Mar. 1955, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 377. NBC claimed that the first twenty-eight spectaculars averaged a 40 rating. See *Broadcasting-Telecasting Yearbook, 1955–56* (Washington, D.C.: Broadcasting Magazine, 1955), 32.

143. Jack Gould, "Network Battle," *New York Times*, 22 May 1955.

144. Pinkham address, 1 Feb. 1955, Hedges Collection.

145. "Battling the Big Odds for Pay TV," *Business Week*, 27 June 1964, 146; Marie Torre, "Pat Weaver, NBC Chairman, Resigns," *New York Herald Tribune*, 8 Sept. 1956.

146. Weaver to NBC Board of Directors, 7 Sept. 1956, Weaver Papers, box 3; Jack Gould, "Weaver Out." Weaver wrote an undated, three-page summary of his years at NBC, unusual in its bitterness. Weaver Papers, box 4.

147. David Rees, "NBC Initiates Multimillion Dollar Color Television Studio in Burbank," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 28 Mar. 1955; "NBC Will Double Color Facilities by Autumn of '56," *Advertising Age*, 14 Nov. 1955, 56. By mid–1957, RCA had spent $25 million on color TV studio facilities. See William B. Harris, "R.C.A. Organizes for Profit," *Fortune*, Aug. 1957, 228.

148. Hal Humphrey, "Little Man, Big Job," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 23 Feb. 1955; Humphrey, "Boots and Bravos," 15 Mar. 1955; "High Prices, Not Enough Programs, Poor Tubes Still Hold Up Color TV," *Advertising Age*, 14 Nov. 1955, 1, 145. In 1955, the average cost of a black-and-white set was $138, compared to $500 for a color receiver. Not until 1962 did more than 1 percent of Americans have color televisions. See Sterling and Haight, *Mass Media*, 372. RCA's color marketing problems are discussed in Harris, "R.C.A. Organizes," 114–15, 228.

149. NBC Television Affiliates, Executive Committee Report, Meeting of Apr. 8–9, 1954, NBC Papers, LC, folder 938. The set total is from "Chasing the Rainbow," *Time*, 30 June 1958, 36. Sterling and Haight, *Mass Media*, 360, list an even lower figure.

150. Harris, "R.C.A. Organizes," 110–11, 114, 230, 232, 234.

151. Interview with Michael Dann, 14 June 1979.

152. Weaver, *Best Seat*, 113–15, 243–44, 269; Whiteside, "The Communicator," 23 Oct. 1954, 51–53; transcript of UCLA lecture, 10 June 1987, 2, Weaver Papers, box 28. While a consultant to RCA in the early 1950s, David Lilienthal recorded in his diary the difficulties of working with Sarnoff. See, for example, *Venturesome Years*, 131–32, 145–46, 449. Sometime before his resignation, Weaver tried to persuade the Rockefeller family to purchase NBC. He and Nelson A. Rockefeller had been Dartmouth classmates and remained

friends. Sarnoff had occasionally hinted at his willingness to sell the network and concentrate on electronics. Although the Rockefellers seriously considered Weaver's proposition, in the end they would not come to his rescue. Cary Reich, *The Life of Nelson A. Rockefeller: Worlds to Conquer, 1908–1958* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 686.

153. On June 5, 1956, Weaver wrote a defensive memo to Sarnoff, trying to explain NBC's ratings slippage. Weaver Papers, box 4.

154. *1958 International Television Almanac* (New York: Quigley Publications, 1957), 12A; minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 13 Nov. 1950, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 839; memos, George D. Matson to J. M. Clifford, 5 Apr. 1956, and Matson to S. L. Weaver et al., 10 May 1956, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 126; attachment, George C. McConnaughey to Emanuel Celler, 22 June 1956, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 757; "End of the Weaver Era at NBC," *Business Week*, 15 Sept. 1956, 29.

155. Memo, George Bristol [of CBS] to All TV Network Salesmen, 14 Feb. 1957, copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 140; memo, Hugh M. Beville Jr. to Thomas McAvity, 29 May 1956, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 766. NBC could have narrowed this gap by discounting its time charges, but the two networks had the same average billing. See memo, George D. Matson to Weaver et al., 10 May 1956, WHS, box 126.

156. Brooks and Marsh, *Complete Directory to Prime Time*, app. 3.

157. Weaver, "Television 1953," 17.

158. Richard A. R. Pinkham, "Analysis of the Season to Date," address, NBC TV Affiliates meeting, 25 Nov. 1955, 3, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 948. Pinkham considered the Phil Silvers program, which premiered in September 1955, to be the exception.

159. F. N. Karmatz, "Television," *New Republic*, 26 Dec. 1955, 21.

160. "Suggested Agenda for Meeting with [NBC] TV Affiliates Committee," 24 Jan. 1956, pt. 4, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 947.

161. "Medic Hurts Lucy," *Business Week*, 26 Mar. 1955, 54. See also Hal Humphrey, "Boots and Bravos," *Los Angeles Mirror News*, 8 Feb. 1955. Steve Allen may have been similarly handicapped trying to challenge *The Ed Sullivan Show* Sunday nights.

162. Jack Gould, "On Spectaculars," *New York Times*, 10 June 1956.

163. Memo, Dan Seymour and John F. Devine to Henry C. Flower Jr. et al., 13 Nov. 1956, Seymour Papers, box 1.

164. Hal Humphrey, "Boots and Bravos," *Los Angeles Mirror News*, 8 Feb. 1955. One NBC analysis of ratings data for San Francisco and Los Angeles of live versus delayed telecasts argued that the spectaculars would change viewer habits, much as *Today* had prompted more people to watch television early in the day. See memo, Ray Eichmann to Robert W. McFadyen, 24 June 1954, NBC Papers, WHS, box 377.

165. Hal Humphrey, "TV Is Going Places," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 9 Mar. 1955. CBS's *Ford Star Jubilee*, modeled after NBC's spectaculars, had similar West Coast ratings problems. See James O. Luce to W. Eldon Hazard, 19 Mar. 1958, Seymour Papers, box 34.

166. Memo, Nancy Mead to Michael Dann, 25 Feb. 1955, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 377. See also remarks of Mike Dann in Kisseloff, *The Box*, 543–44.

167. NBC Television Affiliates, Executive Committee Report, Meeting of Apr. 8–9, 1954, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 938; minutes, NBC-TV Affiliates Committee for Optional Stations, 26 Feb. 1956, ibid., folder 947.

168. In March and April 1955, KRCA in Los Angeles aired one hour of *Tonight* every fourth Monday. See John Crosby, "Wishbones and Kinkajous," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 3 Mar. 1955; Hal Humphrey, "Allen a Hit, Berle a Flop," ibid., 7 Apr. 1955. Both John Frankenheimer and Marc Daniels describe the horrors of editing videotape. Daniels oral history, 1981, 22, and Frankenheimer oral history, 1982, 9A, DGA. Videotape costs rose sharply when it encouraged constant retakes by some performers and directors, including Frankenheimer. See Irving Bernstein, *The Economics of Television Film Production and Distribution* (Hollywood: Screen Actors Guild, 1960), 104–5.

169. As late as the 1958–59 season, however, a majority of Jack Benny's programs were telecast live. See James L. Baughman, "Nice Guys Last Fifteen Seasons: Jack Benny on Television, 1950–65," in *Television Histories: Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age*, ed. Gary R. Edgerton and Peter C. Rollins, 322 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001).

170. Of those polled in 1953, 52.6 percent reported no preference, compared to 23.9 percent favoring live originations and 23.5 percent preferring filmed dramas. See Advertest Research, Inc., "Television Dramatic Programs," *Television Audience of Today* 4 (Feb. 1953): 17, copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 193.

171. Val Adams, "NBC Is Dropping 3 Sunday Dramas," *New York Times*, 1 Mar. 1957.

172. E. L. Deckinger to Dan Sobel, 25 Feb. 1957, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 141.

173. Thaine Engel to Harry Rauch, 1 Feb. 1957, ibid., box 148.

174. Franklin J. Schaffner, oral history, 1992, DGA. Even in mid–1950, the northeastern urban area's preference for live drama could be established. Producer Albert McCleery received 40 letters regarding the teleplay "The Long Walk," aired on *Cameo Theatre*, May 30. Eleven had no return address; 12 were postmarked from greater New York; 4, from the Boston area. One turkey farmer, in Pennsylvania, praised the program. The correspondence is in the McCleery Papers, box 7.

175. Jack Poggi, *Theater in America: The Impact of Economic Forces 1870–1967* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), esp. 33–45, 61–62.

176. On this point, see Henry Jenkins, *What Made Pistachio Nuts? Early Sound Comedy and the Vaudeville Aesthetic* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), chap. 6; Jenkins, "'Shall We Make It for New York or for Distribution?': Eddie Cantor, Whoopee, and Regional Resistance to the Talkies," *Cinema Journal* 29 (Spring 1990): 34, 38–39; Harold Jones and Herbert Conrad, "Rural Preferences in Motion Pictures," *Journal of Social Psychology* 1 (Feb. 1930): 419–23.

177. Scripts, *Texaco Star Theater*, 21 Oct. 1952, and 9 June 1953, Berle Papers, box 5; Bernie Harrison, "It's Been Uncle Miltie's Year for Program Headaches, Too," *Washington Star*, 8 May 1955; "Milton Berle, Video's 'King,' Dethroned by Phil Silvers," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 14 Apr. 1957, Hearst Collection.

178. Caesar and Davidson, *Where Have I Been?* 162–66; Charles Denton, "No Room for 'Trial, Error' in TV Today," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 28 Oct. 1958, Hearst Collection; Stanley Frank, "Television's Desperate Numbers Game," *Saturday Evening Post*, 7 Dec. 1957, 150.

179. Press release, NBC Television Research and Planning, 15 Feb. 1957, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 140; draft of press release, [26 Mar. 1958], ibid., box 178.

180. "Sarnoff Drives to Put NBC Out Front in TV," *Business Week*, 16 Feb. 1957, 90, 92; memo, George D. Matson to S. L. Weaver et al., 10 May 1956, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 126. See also George Frey, remarks, TV Affiliates Meeting, Chicago, 31 Aug. 1954, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 938.

181. Memo, Joe Culligan to Sylvester L. Weaver, 27 Mar. 1956, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 126; "Queen for a Day: Housewives Schedule Wrecker," *Look*, 1 Apr. 1958, 120. See also "Digest of Mr. Beville's Discussion," attachment to minutes [NBC Affiliates Executive Committee Meeting, Aug. 7–8, 1956], in NBC Papers, LC, folder 947. On the planning for *Queen for a Day* (originally entitled *Glamour Girl*), see Charles C. Barry, remarks, TV Affiliates' Committee Meeting, 26 May 1953, ibid., folder 940. See also Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Times Books, 1994), 32–33.

182. Weaver, address to Advertising and Sales Club of Seattle, 10 Apr. 1957, copy in Seymour Papers, box 1; Weaver to Murray [?], n.d., Weaver Papers, box 3; transcript of Weaver UCLA lecture, 29 Apr. 1987, 3–4, ibid., box 28; *Business Week*, 13 Apr. 1957, 61; *Broadcasting*, 26 May 1958, 58; "Weaver Dickering WGN for Network," *Variety*, 20 Mar. 1957, 35; "Weaver Network Reported," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 9 Apr. 1957, Hearst Collection.

183. Minutes of NBC Affiliates Executive Committee Meeting, 13 Feb. 1957, KOMU Papers, folder 156; Robert W. Sarnoff to Edward Lambert, 1 Mar. 1957, ibid., folder 157. See also "TV Programmers Play It Safe," *Business Week*, 29 June 1957, 108.

184. Minutes of NBC Television Affiliates Committee, 26 and 27 June 1957, KOMU Papers, folder 157. See also Manie Sacks, "What's Ahead in Television," *1958 International Television Almanac*, 31A.

185. Weaver was advising *Maverick*'s sponsor, Kaiser Aluminum. See Weaver to William Orr, 31 July 1957, and notes on pilot, 17 July 1957, Weaver Papers, box 13.

186. Memo, Hugh M. Beville Jr. to Robert E. Kintner, 30 Dec. 1957, copy in Radio and Television Department Records, J. Walter Thompson Records, box 6; Brooks and Marsh, *Complete Directory to Prime Time*, app. 3.

187. Richard K. Doan, "NBC's Kintner: The Hot No-Hitter," *New York Herald Tribune*, *New York Magazine*, 16 May 1965, 43.

Chapter 6. Paley's Choice

Epigraphs: "Television: The New Cyclops," *Business Week*, 10 Mar. 1956, 80. John Crosby, "Mediocrity Reigns at CBS," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 13 Apr. 1955.

1. Lewis J. Paper, *Empire: William S. Paley and the Making of CBS* (New York: St. Martin's, 1987), 111–12; Sally Bedell Smith, *In All His Glory: The Life and Times of William S. Paley* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 234–36; E. J. Kahn Jr., *Jock: The Life and Times of John Hay Whitney* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981), 41. A similar exchange occurred between Paley and one of his more honored radio writers. See R. LeRoy Bannerman, *Norman Corwin and Radio: The Golden Years* (University: University of Alabama Press, 1986), 199–200.

2. Weaver, comments to NBC top management, 30 Sept. 1949, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 1250.

3. Frank Stanton to Eugene Meyer, 23 Jan. 1950, Meyer Papers, box 103.

4. Quoted in Martin Mayer, "Television's Lord of Creation. Part 1: Strategic Thinking at NBC," *Harper's* Nov. 1956, 26; Pat Weaver, *The Best Seat in the House; The Golden Years of Radio and Television* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 166–67, 171, 193. See also Hubbell Robinson Jr., "The Way It Was: The CBS Television Network Programming Department," typescript Robinson Papers, 2–3; Kenneth Michael Mashon, "NBC, J. Walter Thompson, and the Evolution of Prime-Time Television Programming and Sponsorship, 1946–1958" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1995), 79.

5. William S. Paley, "The Path to Leadership," address to CBS Television Network Affiliates, 5 May 1961, copy in Mayer Papers, box 63; Bob Considine, "Live from New York—This Is TV's Bill Paley," *New York Journal American*, 26 May 1965; Sally Bedell Smith, *In All His Glory*, 258–60; "C.B.S. Steals the Show," *Fortune*, July 1953, 80, 82; Robinson, "The Way It Was," 2–4, 7, Robinson Papers; Frank Stanton, (1968) COHC, 314.

6. Weaver, *Best Seat*, 167.

7. "C.B.S. Steals the Show," 164; transcript of interview with Paley, 29, 10 Jan. 1964, Pete Martin Papers, box 34; Frank Stanton, COHC (1968), 317.

8. William Boddy, "Building the World's Largest Advertising Medium: CBS and Television, 1940–1960," in *Hollywood in the Age of Television*, ed. Tino Balio, 69–70 (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990); CBS, *Annual Report, 1957*, 7; minutes, Board of Directors meeting, 30 Apr. 1951, Hinckley Papers, box 84; telegram, Frank Stanton to Eugene Meyer, 16 Feb. [1949], Meyer Papers, box 103; Jack Gould, "Columbia Network Reportedly Seeking A.B.C. at $28,000,000," *New York Times*, 4 May 1951; memos, Stanton to Paley, 23 Sept. and 18 Oct. 1954, Joseph Ream to file, 11 Mar. 1952, Paley to Stanton, 14 Sept. 1948, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 756; memos, George M. Burbach to Joseph Pulitzer Jr., 14 Aug. and 23 Aug. 1951, and Burbach to Pulitzer et al., 13 May 1953, Pulitzer Papers, box 112. The FCC rejected CBS's petition to drop a New Hampshire ETV VHF; it was able to secure a Chicago license in early 1953 for $6 million. "C.B.S. Steals the Show," 79; FCC, *Reports* 41 (1952), 148, 241–42.

9. *Worthington Miner: A Directors Guild of America Oral History* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1985), 183.

10. "TV's Time of Trouble," *Fortune*, Aug. 1951, 134. CBS's dividend dropped from $2 per share in 1948 to $1.40 in 1949. At $1.60 per share in 1950, 1951, and 1952, it began rising thereafter. See Common Carrier Field Office, FCC, "Preliminary Draft of Report on Corporation and Financial History of the Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.," Feb. 1956, table 3. Copy in Acc. No. 72A1986, box 14, FCC Records, GSA. See also Boddy, "Building the World's Largest Advertising Medium," 72.

11. "CBS Steals the Show," 164; *Variety*, 15 Nov. 1950, 35, 53.

12. Sally Bedell Smith, *In All His Glory*, 271–73, 361, 438; notes of interview with Phil King, n.d. [late 1960s], Mayer Papers, box 66; ONS, unabridged notes of interview with CBS officials, 6–9 Oct. 1958, Acc. No. 72A1986, box 16, FCC Records, GSA; Frank Sturcken, *Live Television: The Golden Age of 1946–1958 in New York* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1990), 32; Robinson, "The Way It Was," 7–10, 14; Jess Oppenheimer and Gregg Oppenheimer, *Laughs, Luck, . . . and Lucy: How I Came to Create the Most Popular Sitcom of All Time* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 132; House Investigation, 282.

13. ABC had sold 8 hours, Du Mont 5 hours, 50 minutes. See Minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 12 June 1950, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 839.

14. See, for example, memo, George M. Burbach to Joseph Pulitzer II, 13 May 1953, Pulitzer Papers, box 112.

15. Memo, Dan Seymour and John F. Devine to Henry C. Flower Jr. et al., 13 Nov. 1956, Seymour Papers, box 1.

16. Robert Slater, *This . . . Is CBS; A Chronicle of 60 Years* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1988), 150–51. CBS's answer to *Today*, *The Morning Show*, is reviewed in *Variety*, 17 Mar. 1954, 27.

17. John Daniels, "Bountiful Benny," *TV World*, Aug. 1953, 76, clipping in Benny Papers, UCLA, box 90. See also Bill Irvin, "Jack's His Own Best 'Gimmick,'" *Chicago Sun-Times*, 23 Aug. 1952, clipping in ibid., box 89. On the raids' lack of impact, see memo, S. M. Chambers to Joseph Pulitzer II, 17 May 1950, Pulitzer Papers, box 112.

18. Thomas Cripps, "*Amos 'n' Andy* and the Debate over American Racial Integration," in *American History/American Television*, ed. John E. O'Connor, 33–54 (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1983); Gerard Jones, *Honey, I'm Home! Sitcoms; Selling the American Dream* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 52–60.

19. Philip Hamburger, "Barometer Falling," *New Yorker*, 10 June 1950, 70, 71.

20. Buck Herzog, "In Case of Quadruplets, There's Always the Four-in-Hand," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 7 May 1955, clipping in Emerson Papers, box 1; "Collie Knox Says Goodbye to America, but First, Hello to Mr. Godfrey," *Daily Mail* (London), clipping in Hinckley Papers, box 87; George Rosen, "Godfrey's $10,500,000 Billings," *Variety*, 14 June 1950, 35, 54; John Crosby, "The Amateurs Take Over TV," *Saturday Evening Post*, 8 Nov. 1952, 31; Godfrey, obituary, *Syracuse Post-Standard*, 17 Mar. 1983; Steve Allen, *The Funny Men* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), 6, 186–94, 196–97; "Oceans of Empathy," *Time*, 27 Feb. 1950, 72–73, 77–78; Ben Gross, *I Looked and I Listened; Informal Recollections of Radio and TV* (New York: Random House, 1954), 184–86.

21. Quoted in R. D. Heldenfels, *Television's Greatest Year: 1954* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 17.

22. *Worthington Miner*, 184–90; Crosby, "The Amateurs," 30, 31; Robinson, "The Way It Was," 11–12; Max Wilk, *The Golden Age of Television; Notes from the Survivors* (New York: Dell, 1976), 25–29; John Leonard, *A Really Big Show; A Visual History of the Ed Sullivan Show* (New York: VikingPenguin, 1992), 42–43. In his oral history and elsewhere, Miner referred to Sullivan as "my answer to Berle." (See *Worthington Miner*, 189; Wilk, *Golden Age*, 25). This appears highly unlikely. Berle made his debut only twelve days before Sullivan and was only beginning to generate interest. Some sources claim that the advertising agent Marlo Lewis suggested that Sullivan host the program. See Leonard, *Really Big Show*, 37.

23. "Big as All Outdoors," *Time*, 17 Oct. 1955, 78, 80; Leonard, *Really Big Show*, 37, 40; Gross, *I Looked*, 189–91; "Television Follow-Up," *Variety*, 15 Sept. 1948, 30; Robinson, "The Way It Was," 13, 14, 15, 16; James Maguire, *Impresario: The Life and Times of Ed Sullivan* (New York: Billboard Books, 2006), 123, 131–32, 138–40, 147–48, 171. Weekly cost estimates listed in *Variety*, 15 Nov. 1950, 35, 51. See also Robert C. Durham to Robert B. Brown, 6 Dec. 1954, Thomas D'A. Brophy Papers, box 51.

24. Walter Ames, "Golden Boy Scores as TV Actor," *Los Angeles Times*, 29 Sept. 1955; Wilk, *Golden Age*, 43–51. For a more critical "reading" of *Mama*,

see George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), chap. 4.

25. Kathleen Brady, *Lucille: The Life of Lucille Ball* (New York: Hyperion, 1994), 167–68, 173–74; agreement, Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., and Desilu Corp., 18 Dec. 1950, copy in House TV Inquiry hearings, box 752. The December 1950 agreement allowed nine of the shows to be filmed. On Sharpe's video career, see Hal Humphrey, "Sharpe Isn't Worried by Movie Invasion," *Washington Star*, 1 May 1955.

26. Oppenheimer and Oppenheimer, *Laughs*, 132–34; CBS-Desilu agreement, Dec. 18, 1950.

27. Dotson Rader, "The Magic of Lucy," *Parade Magazine*, 24 June 1984, 5; Coyne Steven Sanders and Tom Gilbert, *Desilu: The Story of Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz* (New York: William Morrow, 1993), 37–38.

28. Script, *The Jack Benny Television Show*, 28 Oct. 1950, Benny Papers, UCLA, box 42. Benny's Oct. 25, 1950, contract with CBS specified that his program would originate from Los Angeles once the coaxial cable reached California and made such originations possible. A copy of the employment agreement is in ibid., box 94.

29. "Amos 'n' Andy TV Series Bought by Blatz at 40G Wkly," *Variety*, 31 Jan. 1951, 23.

30. Stanton, "Twelfth Annual Charles Coolidge Parlin Memorial Lecture," American Marketing Association, 15 May 1956, copy in Senate TV Inquiry, box 695. In mid–1951, Stanton told *Fortune* magazine that in time he believed most network telecasts would be on film. See "TV's Time of Trouble," 131. Paley had made a similar forecast several years earlier. See Abel Green, "TV to Provide Market for 5,000 Hours of Pix in a Few Years, Paley Predicts," *Variety*, 26 Jan. 1949, 1.

31. Amendment to Dec. 18, 1950 agreement, Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., and Desilu Corp., 6 Aug. 1951, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 752; Gerard Jones, *Honey, I'm Home!* 59, 64–66; Stefan Kanfer, *Ball of Fire: The Tumultuous Life and Comic Art of Lucille Ball* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 125–26; Sanders and Gilbert, *Desilu*, 39. As Brady, *Lucille*, 181–82, notes, Ralph Edwards had developed a technique for filming his quiz program *Truth or Consequences* in 35-mm, which could be used for the Ball-Arnaz show. See also Walter Ames, "Edwards Finds Moviemaking Strange Business," *Los Angeles Times*, 28 Jan. 1951, clipping in Emerson Papers, box 2. On the wretched quality of some early filmed series, see memo, Fred J. Mahlstedt to Merle S. Jones, 27 Oct. 1952, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 756; Gerard Jones, *Honey, I'm Home!* 48–49.

32. Bart Andrews, *The Story of "I Love Lucy"* (New York: Popular Library, 1976), 36, 38–40; Gerard Jones, *Honey, I'm Home!* 65.

33. Andrews, *Story of "I Love Lucy,"* 36, 38, 39–40; Oppenheimer and Oppenheimer, *Laughs*, 4–5, 115, chap. 11; Lori Landay, *Madcaps, Screwballs, and*

Con Women: The Female Trickster in American Culture (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 155, 159–93; "Star Talk: Luce on Lucy, as Told to Cecil Smith," in *TV Book: The Ultimate Television Book*, ed. Judy Fireman, 159 (New York: Workman, 1977); "Tonight's TV Tips," *Los Angeles Mirror–News*, 28 Feb. 1955; William A. Henry III, "A Zany Redheaded Everywoman," *Time*, 8 May 1989, 101. See also Alan Carter and Alan Mirabella, "Everybody Loved Lucy," *New York Daily News*, 27 Apr. 1989; Dotson Rader, "Magic of Lucy," 6; Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Times Books, 1994), 50, 127–28; Joyce Millman, "Coolly Confident, Timelessly Funny," *New York Times*, 14 Oct. 2001; Anita Gates, "Endlessly Lovable, but Damaging Too," ibid.

34. "Sassafrassa, the Queen," *Time*, 26 May 1952, 68.

35. Oppenheimer and Oppenheimer, *Laughs*, chap. 12; Brady, *Lucille*, 182–84, 196; Andrews, *Story of "I Love Lucy,"* 42; Douglas McGrath, "The Man behind the Throne: Making the Case for Desi," *New York Times*, 14 Oct. 2001; Diane Haithman, "The Industry's Debt to Lucy," *Los Angeles Times*, 30 Apr. 1989; Thomas Schatz, "Desilu, *I Love Lucy*, and the Rise of Network TV," in *Making Television: Authorship and the Production Process*, ed. Robert J. Thompson and Gary Burns, 122–23 (New York: Praeger, 1990); William Lafferty, "'No Attempt at Artiness, Profundity, or Significance': *Fireside Theatre* and the Rise of Filmed Television Programming," *Cinema Journal* 27 (Fall 1987): 28–29; Jerry Fairbanks, "New Low-Cost TV Film Technique," *Television Magazine* (Nov. 1949): 23, 28. On the presence of audiences in early TV sitcom production, see, for example, Dick O'Connor and Eddy Jo Bernal, "Eve Arden Proud of 'Happy Show' Which She First Refused," *Los Angeles Herald and Express*, 1 Mar. 1955, Hearst Collection. In his 1981 oral history, Marc Daniels, involved in the production of the early episodes, notes the sacrifice of the fourth camera, 14–15, DGA.

36. Jack Gould quoted in Andrews, *Story of "I Love Lucy,"* 106; Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh, *The Complete Directory to Prime Time and Cable TV Shows; 1945–Present*, 6th ed. (New York: Ballantine, 1995), app. 3; script, *Texaco Star Theater*, 25 Nov. 1952, Berle Papers, box 3.

37. Memo, Thomas A. McAvity to John K. Herbert, 2 Sept. 1953, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 766.

38. Erik Barnouw, *The Image Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 6–7; John Scott Fones to Eisenhower, 27 Sept. 1954, Eisenhower Papers, General Files 129-A–2/1003.

39. Memo, Weaver to Frank White, 16 Mar. 1953, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 176; Isidore Lindebaum, "Film on the Marx," *Television Magazine* (Aug. 1952): 31–32.

40. "Move Is West: Boss of Columbia Sees Exodus to Hollywood," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 25 Nov. 1952, clipping in Fox Papers, box 9; "Western Approach," *Time*, 24 Nov. 1952, 85.

41. CBS, untitled press release, [Oct. 1952]; "CBS Dedicates Television City," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 16 Nov. 1952; "Network Adds Big Buildings," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 23 June 1957, all in Hearst Collection. See also "Southland Gains in Tele Center for U.S.," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 5 Oct. 1952, clipping in ibid.; Jack Hellman, "Television's Timid Trans Trek," *Variety*, 31 May 1950, 23, 32. Columbia began planning a West Coast facility in mid–1949. CBS Television, "CBS Television City, World's First Exclusively-Designed TV Plant," press release, 5 Feb. 1952, copy in Hearst Collection.

42. See, for example, minutes of NBC Staff Meetings, 12 Nov. 1951, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 837, 27 Oct. 1952, ibid., folder 835, and 13 July 1953, ibid., folder 833.

43. CBS-Desilu, 6 Aug. 1951 amendment, 18; Oppenheimer and Oppenheimer, *Laughs*, 143.

44. Memo, Richard A. R. Pinkham to Thomas McAvity, 31 Jan. 1956, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 126; memo, Al Morrison to John Devine, 24 Sept. 1956, Radio and Television Department, Thompson Papers, box 1.

45. Emphasis added. Nelson to Carol Irwin, 27 Oct. 1952, Ralph Nelson Papers, box 43.

46. Goodman Ace, "The Big Layoff," *Saturday Review*, 18 July 1953, 31; Martin N. Leeds to Merritt Coleman, 10 Mar. 1955; [production agreement], CBS Television and Desilu Productions, Inc., 15 Mar. 1955, copies in House TV Inquiry hearings, box 752; minutes of NBC-TV Affiliates Meeting, 18–19 Oct. 1951, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 941.

47. Typescript of news story draft, [19 May 1956], copy in Radio and Television Department, Thompson Papers, box 1.

48. Memo, Irene Dunne to W. Eldon Hazard, 14 Dec. 1955, Seymour Papers, box 7; Advertest Research, Inc., "Study of Repeat TV Programs," *Television Audience of Today* 6 (July 1954), copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 193.

49. *Sponsor*, 26 Dec. 1955, 2.

50. Schatz, "Desilu," 121.

51. Based on the schedules in Brooks and Marsh, *Complete Directory to Prime Time*, app. 1, for fall 1950 through fall 1955 seasons. This measure does not include summer replacement series.

52. Merle S. Jones, "Looking Great This Fall," *1958 International Television Almanac* (New York: Quigley Publications, 1957), 25A.

53. Hal Humphrey, "There's No Escape," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 14 Apr. 1955.

54. Dick O'Connor and Eddy Jo Bernal, untitled clipping, *Los Angeles Herald and Express*, 28 Feb. 1955, Hearst Collection.

55. Hal Humphrey, "A Mother-in-Law Pays Off," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 28 Feb. 1955.

56. Memos, Weaver to White, 16 Mar. 1953; Weaver to Sarnoff, 5 June 1956, Weaver Papers, box 4.

57. Nielsen Radio-TV Index, "Presentation Report to J. Walter Thompson," 23 Apr. 1957, Thompson Papers, Radio and Television Department, box 6; Kahn, *Jock*, 70; Richard Norton Smith, *The Colonel: The Life and Legend of Robert R. McCormick* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), xix.

58. Schatz, "Desilu," 126–27.

59. David Everitt, *King of the Half Hour: Nat Hiken and the Golden Age of Comedy* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 100–101, 103, 116; transcript of interview with Robinson, "WCBS Radio Looks at Television," 24 Sept. 1965, 3–4, copy in Robinson Papers; John Crosby, "A Very Funny Show," *New York Herald Tribune*, 26 Sept. 1955; David Kamp, "King Banana," *Vanity Fair* (Apr. 2003), 241–42, 269–72; Charles Winick, *Taste and Censor in Television* (New York: Fund for the Republic, 1959), 10. See Allen, *Funny Men*, 253–54, 257–61, 262–63. Also defending the series was U.S. army captain Robert L. Hogan, *Army Times*, 24 Dec. 1955, clipping in Hiken Papers, box 35.

60. Allen, *Funny Men*, 263–64. *You'll Never Get Rich* never ranked higher than 22nd in the Nielsens (in 1956–57), in part because of competition from both NBC and ABC.

61. Robert Salmaggi, "Sgt. Bilko's Wild, Wild World," *New York Herald Tribune*, *TV and Radio Magazine*, Jan. 15–21, 1956, 6.

62. Robinson, "The Way It Was," 15.

63. David Weinstein, *The Forgotten Network: Du Mont and the Birth of American Television* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 116–34; Audrey Meadows and Joe Daley, *Love, Alice: My Life as a Honeymooner* (New York: Crown, 1994), 27, 117; agreement, CBS Television and Jackie Gleason, 23 Nov. 1951, copy in House TV Inquiry hearings, box 752; Allen, *Funny Men*, 147–50; David Marc, *Demographic Vistas: Television in American Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), 102–10; David Hinckley, "Hitting the High Note: Ralph and Alice Kramden," *New York Daily News*, 17 May 1999.

64. Meadows and Daley, *Love, Alice*, 214–15.

65. William A. Henry III, *The Great One: The Life and Legend of Jackie Gleason* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 106–7, 120, 124; memo, Weaver to White, 16 Mar. 1953; Meadows and Daley, *Love, Alice*, 49.

66. Sally Bedell Smith, *In All His Glory*, 271; Henry, *Great One*, 124.

67. "J. Walter Thompson Co.—Chicago—Television Department Report—Nov. 1955," "Television Sponsorship Trends," copy in Seymour Papers, box 1.

68. Allen, *Funny Men*, 261.

69. NBC owned 15.2 percent of its prime-time schedule; ABC, 5.4 percent. FCC, *Second Interim Report by the Office of Network Study, Television Network Program Procurement*, pt. 2 (Washington, D.C.: 1965), 727. On Desilu and CBS, see Docket 12782, vol. 11, *Proc.*, 24:4478–479, FCC Records, NA.

70. See, for example, memos, H. F. McKeon to Carleton D. Smith, 17 Dec. 1948, and Charles J. Cresswell to Robert P. Myers, 11 Sept. 1950, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 593; minutes of NBC Board of Directors, 6 Apr. 1956, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 865; minutes of NBC Board of Directors, 1 Dec. 1950, 5 Jan. 1951 and 5 Apr. 1951, ibid., folder 877; "Supplementary Data on Proposed Kagran transaction," [31 Jan. 1955], ibid., folder 868.

71. Memo to files, 14 Aug. 1956, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 758, and U.S. Congress, Judiciary Committee, *Report of the Antitrust Subcommittee (Subcommittee No. 5)*, 85th Congress, 1st sess., 1957, 43–44.

72. Arnaz, in need of working capital, approached Columbia about buying 24 percent of Desilu. See Docket 12782, vol. 11, *Proc.*, 24:4479, FCC Records, NA.

73. Celler, "Pay-TV: Can Free Television Survive Its Advent," address, 29 Oct. 1957, Celler Papers, box 487. See also Celler's opening statement in House *Monopoly Problems*, 3107, and *Report of the Antitrust Subcommittee*, 55–56.

74. House TV Inquiry hearings, 2176; FCC, *Public Service Responsibilities of Broadcast Licensees* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1946), 13.

75. See Victor R. Hansen to John C. Doerfer, 31 Mar. 1958, copy in Minow Papers, box 26; ONS, "Interview with Representatives of CBS, Inc. (CBS-TV Division), Oct. 6–9, 1958," 65, Acc. No. 72A1986, box 16, FCC Records, GSA, and report for the Board of Directors meeting, 11 Mar. 1949, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 882.

76. "Television: The New Cyclops," *Business Week*, 10 Mar. 1956, 80.

77. Memos, Weaver to White, 16 Mar. 1953; Weaver to files [?], 30 Jan. 1956, Weaver Papers, box 4; George Rosen, "Sullivan—TV's 'Biog King,'" *Variety*, 10 June 1953, 34; Maguire, *Impresario*, 130–31, 137–38, 148–50, 153, 156, 160, 171. Martin and Lewis were still competitive with Sullivan but would not commit to hosting the program every week. See "Sullivan Attrition Too Much; Colgate Tosses in Sponge, NBC Is Silent," *Advertising Age*, 21 Nov. 1955, 1, 97; memos, Robert W. McFadyen to Sylvester L. Weaver, 27 Nov. and 31 Oct. 1950, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 593; minutes of NBC Staff Meetings, 10 Mar. and 24 Nov. 1952, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 835.

78. Memo, Hugh M. Beville Jr. to Jack Herbert, 30 Sept. 1953, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 766.

79. Doris Quinlan to Carol Irwin et al., 29 Sept. 1954, Ralph Nelson Papers, box 43.

80. George Rosen, "TV's 'Blues in the Night,'" *Variety*, 6 Oct. 1954, 23. See also Lawrence Laurent, "TV Super Show Era Is Here!" *Washington Post*, 12 Sept. 1954.

81. Memo, Robert Daubenspeck to David Sarnoff et al., 7 Oct. 1955, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 169. See also "Mex Standoff on TV Specs," *Variety*, 6 Oct. 1954, 25, 49, and Nielsen ratings for Oct. 29-Nov. 12, 1955, in *Advertising Age*, 12 Dec. 1955, 96.

82. Charles Denton, "Many Reasons for TV Flops," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 2 Jan. 1957, Hearst Collection.

83. Jack Gould, "Network Battle," *New York Times*, 22 May 1955, and Val Adams, "News of Radio and Television," ibid.

84. Richard Austin Smith, "TV: The Coming Showdown," *Fortune*, Sept. 1954, 164.

85. Minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 28 Jan. 1952, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 835; memo, Beville to Herbert, 30 Sept. 1953.

86. John Crosby, "Mediocrity Reigns at CBS," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 13 Apr. 1955; Gould, "Network Battle"; *Space and Time: Inside Advertising* Newsletter, 21 Mar. 1955, copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 169; Sydney H. Eiges to Anthony LaCamera, 30 Mar. 1955, NBC Papers, WHS, box 169. For similar sentiments, see Anthony La Camera, "Peter Pan Points Lesson to CBS," *Boston Advertiser*, 20 Mar. 1955, copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 169.

87. Hubbell Robinson Jr., "Television Faces Life," *Esquire*, Jan. 1955, 106. Producer Louis Cowan termed the opinions of the New York critics and the trade press "very important" to both the networks and advertisers. See interview notes, ca. 1956, Mayer Papers, box 63.

88. Memo, W. Eldon Hazard to D. B. Thorburn, 18 Sept. 1956, Seymour Papers, box 30.

89. Jack Gould, review of *Caine*, *New York Times*, 21 Nov. 1955.

90. "Culture, Ratings, and People," *Advertising Age*, 7 Nov. 1955, 80. Several months later, Coward's *Blithe Spirit*, starring the playwright and Lauren Bacall, actually had strong ratings. See worksheet, "Saturday Eve, Jan. 14 [1956]," *Ford Star Jubilee* ratings, copy in Seymour Papers, box 33.

91. "The N.Y. notices are enclosed, all of them but the [Daily] News pretty good." Dick [Markell?] to Ralph Nelson, 8 May 1956, Ralph Nelson Papers, box 42. See also Nelson to Hubbell Robinson, 16 May 1956, and Robinson to Nelson, 21 May 1956, in ibid., box 77.

92. R. S. McNamara to Frank Stanton, 17 May 1956; F. R. Thomas to E. J. Reeser, 8 May 1956, copies in Seymour Papers, box 33; memo, R. E. Buchanan to Jack Devine, 4 Dec. 1956, copy in ibid., box 30. In October 1956, CBS announced that future *Jubilee* telecasts would no longer be aired live on the West Coast. But this decision came too late to retain Ford's sponsorship. Memo, Ruth Jone to J. Luce, 9 Oct. 1956, copy in ibid., box 34.

93. Memo, Kenneth Bilby to Edgar Peck, 20 Nov. 1956, in NBC Papers, LC, box 140; "Television: The New Cyclops," 80; notes of interview with Robinson, [1956], Mayer Papers, box 63.

94. Memo, Dan Seymour and John F. Devine to Henry C. Flower Jr. et al., 13 Nov. 1956, Seymour Papers, box 1. Stanton later asserted that *Playhouse 90* "was originally my idea." Stanton, COHC (1968), 243–44.

95. "The Biggest Playhouse," *Time*, 22 Oct. 1956, 87; Serling to Ralph Nelson, 26 June 1961, Ralph Nelson Papers, box 20; Judine Mayerle, "'Requiem for a Heavyweight' and *Playhouse 90*," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 17 (Summer 1989): 57–66.

96. Paul Weltman to Ralph Nelson, 26 Feb. 1957, Ralph Nelson Papers, box 44. The week of 1 Dec. 1957, *Playhouse 90* finished ninth in the Videodex ratings. See *Broadcasting*, 6 Jan. 1958, 40.

97. Tentative budget, 27 Dec. 1956, *Cinderella*, copy in Ralph Nelson Papers, box 77; Harold Messing, "The CBS Production of *Cinderella*" (master's thesis, Stanford University, 1957), 21–22, 38, 58; Robin Pogrebin, "Magical Find Excites TV Historians," *New York Times*, 20 June 2002; Robert Lewis Shayon, "The Critics and the Emperor's Clothes," *Saturday Review*, 27 Apr. 1957, 26.

98. Nelson to Julie Andrews, 23 Apr. 1957, Ralph Nelson Papers, box 77; Thomas D'A. Brophy to Charles A. Ward, 18 Apr. 1957, Brophy Papers, box 51.

99. Shee Wolff to John Houseman, 28 Oct.[1957], Houseman Papers, box 8. On *Omnibus*, see "The New Shows," *Time*, 24 Nov. 1952, 85–86.

100. A. E. Hotchner, "One Thing after Another—The Adaptation," in *The Eighth Art*, 85–86 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962); Docket 12285, *Proc.*, 4 Mar. 1958, 258, Acc. No. 72A1986, box 8, FCC Records, GSA.

101. Leonard, *Really Big Show*, 34, 35, 133–49, 165–79; "Big as All Outdoors," 72; Mary Clarke, *The Sadler's Wells Ballet: A History and an Appreciation* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1955), 285.

102. Robinson offered an early and spirited case for Columbia in "CBS—In 279 Words," *Variety*, 6 Feb. 1952, 27.

103. Frank Stanton, "The Mass Audience," *New York Times*, 24 Apr. 1949.

104. See, for example, Stanton testimony, Senate *TV Inquiry* hearings, pt. 4, 2143; Stanton to Warren Magnuson, 3 Dec. 1958, copy in Office of Network Study, Acc. No. 72A1986, box 13, FCC Records, GSA.

105. Howard Taubman, "A Brief Voyage," *New York Times*, 10 Mar. 1957. See also Stanley Frank, "Television's Desperate Numbers Game," *Saturday Evening Post*, 7 Dec. 1957, 149–50.

106. James L. Baughman, "'The Strange Birth of *CBS Reports*' Revisited," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 2 (Mar. 1982): 29–31; Charles Collingwood to Eric Sevareid, 27 Feb. 1958, box C–2, Sevareid Papers; *Broadcasting*, 3 Feb. 1958, 54; "Rising Costs Killing TV's News Service," *Editor and Publisher*, 7 Feb. 1958, 56.

107. Paul Cowan, *An Orphan in History: Retrieving a Jewish Legacy* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1982), 79; John Crosby, "The Shakespearean Scholar," *New*

York Herald Tribune, 27 June 1956, 17; "The $64,000 Question," *Newsweek*, 5 Sept. 1955, 42; Kent Anderson, *Television Fraud: The History and Implications of the Quiz Show Scandals* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1978), 8, 10. Less charitable contemporary reviews include Robert Lewis Shayon, "The Tragedy of $64,000," *Saturday Review*, 24 Sept. 1955, 26, and Dan Wakefield, "The Fabulous Sweat Box," *Nation*, 30 Mar. 1957, 269–72.

108. Walter Goodman, *All Honorable Men: Corruption and Compromise in American Life* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1963), 241; Leonard Buder, "Behind the $64,000," *New York Times*, 7 Aug. 1955; Goodman Ace, "The $64,000 Answer," *Saturday Review*, 13 Aug. 1955, 23; Cowan, address, Radio and Television Executives Society, 13 Oct. 1955, Cowan Papers.

109. Pinkham, address to NBC TV affiliates meeting, 25 Nov. 1955, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 948.

110. Pinkham address, 25 Nov. 1955; Weaver, transcript of UCLA lecture, 6 May 1987, Weaver Papers, box 28.

111. Gordon Cotler, "The Question about Quiz Shows," *New York Times Magazine*, 1 Dec. 1957, 90; memo, Richard A. R. Pinkham to George Matson, 20 Feb. 1957, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 141; Kent Anderson, *Television Fraud*, 30, 35. ABC generally refrained from scheduling prime-time quizzes with a one-season exception, *Treasure Hunt*. Anderson, *Television Fraud*, 86–87.

112. Joseph Stone and Tim Yohn, *Prime Time and Misdemeanors; Investigating the 1950s TV Quiz Scandal—A D.A.'s Account* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 43; "The $64,000 Question," 42.

113. Kent Anderson, *Television Fraud*, 20–21, 34; "The $64,000 Question," 41. Coverage of *Twenty-One* was undoubtedly affected by the presence of so many New Yorkers as contestants, in contrast to the other shows. See Kent Anderson, *Television Fraud*, 71, and "The Wizard of Quiz," *Time*, 11 Feb. 1957, 44–45.

114. *Advertising Age*, 14 Nov. 1955, 79; "Five $64,000 TV Questions," *Sponsor*, 17 Oct. 1955, 116; "TV's Biggest Success," *Television Magazine* (Nov. 1955): 51, 86.

115. Boddy, "Building the World's Largest Advertising Medium," 72–73.

116. Notes of interview with Norman B. Norman, of Foote, Cone, and Belding, n.d., Mayer Papers, box 19.

117. "TV's Biggest Success," *Television Magazine* (Nov. 1955): 50. See also "Five $64,000 TV Questions," *Sponsor*, 17 Oct. 1955, 33, 116.

118. Notes of interview with Robinson, n.d., Mayer Papers, box 63.

119. Memo, Storrs Haynes to John Devine, 12 Sept. 1956, Radio and Television Department, box 1, Thompson Papers. NBC, as was its custom, worried less about the regulators and in May 1957 purchased the company producing *Twenty-One*. Kent Anderson, *Television Fraud*, 78.

120. Notes of interview with William E. Matthews, n.d., Mayer Papers, box 19; Connie Bruck, *When Hollywood Had a King: The Reign of Lew Wasser-*

man, *Who Leveraged Talent into Power and Influence* (New York: Random House, 2003), 164; John McCarty and Brian Kelleher, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 11; John Russell Taylor, *Hitch: The Life and Times of Alfred Hitchcock* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996), 227–31. Hitchcock retained the syndication rights. McCarty and Kelleher, *Alfred Hitchcock*, 13.

121. Gorham Kindem, *The Live Television Generation of Hollywood Film Directors; Interviews with Seven Directors* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1994), 94, 96; Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV: The Studio System in the Fifties* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 205; Paper, *Empire*, 181–83.

122. James Baldwin, "Mass Culture and the Creative Artist: Some Personal Notes," *Daedulus* 89 (Spring 1960): 374.

123. Robert Connors, "New Style Show Replaces 'He Went Thataway,'" *Columbus Dispatch*, 29 Sept. 1955; Paper, *Empire*, 183; Kindem, *Live Television*, 95; Hal Humphrey, "Can 'Gunsmoke' Stay Legit?" *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 9 Feb. 1955; Gary A. Yoggy, "Prime-Time Bonanza! The Western on Television," in *Wanted Dead or Alive: The American West in Popular Culture*, ed. Richard Aquila, 160–71(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996); Emily Nussbaum, "The Lone Gunman," *New York Times*, 21 Mar. 2004; Charles W. Day, "The Television Adult Western: A Pilot Study" (master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1958); Steven D. Stark, *Glued to the Set: The 60 Television Shows and Events That Made Us Who We Are Today* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 62–64.

124. Lyndon B. Johnson to Thomas Wolf, 13 Jan. 1969, Johnson Papers, White House Central Files, Name Files. In his oral history, Miner jealously referred to *Gunsmoke* in 1955 as an hour-long series. See *Worthington Miner*, 248–49. *Frontier*'s first program earned a Trendex rating for fifteen cities of 10.1 compared to 28.5 for Benny. The latter had a 64.0 percent share of the audience. *Frontier*'s premiere episode netted a positive brief review by Marie Torre of *Herald Tribune*, 26 Sept. 1955.

125. Hortense Powdermaker, *Hollywood, The Dream Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-Makers* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1950), 40; Richard A. Peterson and Paul Di Maggio, "From Region to Class: The Changing Locus of Country Music: A Test of the Massification Hypothesis," *Social Forces* 53 (Mar. 1975): 497–506.

126. David Hinckley, "Sunday Night Story: Ed Sullivan," *New York Daily News*, 30 Apr. 1999.

127. U.S. Congress, House Commerce Committee, *Network Broadcasting*, Report. No. 1297, 85th Congress, 2nd sess., 27 Jan. 1958, 204; CBS, *Annual Report*, *1956*, 26.

128. "Summary of Apr. 24, 1956 Television Study," copy in Seymour Papers, box 33.

129. George Rosen, "News Casting Its Own 'Die,'" *Variety*, 21 Nov. 1956, 21.

130. Analysis probably by Dan Seymour, 7 Nov. 1956, Seymour Papers, box 1.

Chapter 7. "We Just See That It Isn't Lousy"

Epigraph: Script, *The George Burns Show*, 16 Dec. 1958, 2, Amateau Papers, box 14.

1. Ben Gross, *I Looked and I Listened; Informal Recollections of Radio and TV* (New York: Random House, 1954), 190; "Inside Stuff—Radio-TV," *Variety*, 20 July 1955, 36.

2. Script, *The Buick-Berle Show*, 29 Sept. 1953, Berle Papers, box 5. The vast majority of Berle's guests, however, were not film stars, though Sinatra and Ronald Reagan were notable exceptions.

3. Larry Gelbart, *Laughing Matters* (New York: Random House, 1998), 85. See also Jack Benny and Joan Benny, *Sunday Nights at Seven* (New York: Warner Books, 1990), 90.

4. Ozzie Nelson, *Ozzie* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 152.

5. Hortense Powdermaker, *Hollywood, the Dream Factory; An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-Makers* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1950), 19, 21–22

6. Crosby obituary, *New York Times*, 15 Oct. 1977; Sheilah Graham, *Washington Star*, 2 Nov. 1947, and C. Byron Wortman, "Benny Wants Another Chance," *New York World-Telegram and Sun Saturday Magazine*, 13 Mar. 1954, 20, clippings in Benny Papers, UCLA, box 89; Maurice Zolotow, *No People Like Show People* (New York: Random House, 1951), 171; Charles Thompson, *Bing: The Authorized Biography* (London: W. H. Allen, 1975), 44, 149.

7. William Robert Faith, *Bob Hope; A Life in Comedy* (New York: Putnam, 1981), 125, 149–50. Such close proximity, the sociologist Leo Rosten noted, was partly dictated by older money in Los Angeles, which discouraged film and radio talent from moving into certain neighborhoods or joining certain clubs. Rosten, *Hollywood: The Movie Colony, the Movie Makers* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1941), 164.

8. Thompson, *Bing*, 186.

9. Erskine Johnson, "Bette Davis Spurns Live TV," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 16 Mar. 1955; John Frankenheimer oral history, 1982, 13A, DGA. Davis did appear on *The All Star Revue* with Jimmy Durante in April 1952 and even did a Pet Milk commercial. Script, *All Star Revue*, 19 Apr. 1952, 31, 37–41, Isaacs Papers, box 1.

10. Erskine Johnson, "L and H Close to Big TV Deal," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 25 Jan. 1955.

11. Cornwell Jackson to Dan Seymour, 13 Sept. 1956, Seymour Papers, box 34.

12. S. T. Karnick, "Top Hat; Fred Astaire's Aristocratic Democracy," *Weekly Standard*, 21 June 1999, 37.

13. Walter Ames, "O'Connor Finds TV a Tough Taskmaster," *Los Angeles Times*, 3 May 1953.

14. Erskine Johnson, "Hollywood on TV," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 1 Mar. 1955.

15. David Niven, *The Moon's a Balloon: Reminiscences* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1971), 287.

16. Nelson, *Ozzie*, 204; Thompson, *Bing*, 136–39. In the fall of 1950, 6 of the first 17 Jack Benny radio programs were transcribed, including the 24 and 31 December shows. Scripts in Benny Papers, UCLA, box 35.

17. John Crosby, "Confusion Reigns," *New York Herald Tribune*, 13 Apr. 1948.

18. Clark Roberts, "Audiences Blamed by Tommy Ewell for Some of Video's Ills," *Los Angeles Times*, 3 Oct. 1950.

19. Erskine Johnson, "Hollywood on TV." See also Crosby, "Confusion Reigns."

20. Quoted in Gordon F. Sander, *Serling: The Rise and Twilight of Television's Last Angry Man* (New York, Dutton, 1992), 83.

21. *Worthington Miner: A Directors Guild of America Oral History* (Metuchen, N.J.: Directors Guild of America, 1985), 207; Crosby, "Confusion Reigns."

22. Jeff Kisseloff, *The Box: An Oral History of Television, 1920–1961* (New York: Viking, 1995), 231–33.

23. Rosten, *Hollywood*, 335n.

24. Powdermaker, *Hollywood*, 272–74, 276–78. See also Rebecca Mead, "The Almost It Girl," *New Yorker*, 20 Oct. 2003, 97.

25. Crosby, "Plunging Neckline," *New York Herald Tribune*, 23 Jan. 1950, reprinted in Crosby, *Out of the Blue; A Book about Radio and Television*, 102–4 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952); William Crawford notes of Earl Wilson column, 15 Apr. 1951, in Emerson Papers, box 1; press release, Pepsi-Cola, Feb. 1951, ibid.; Christine A. Becker, "An Industrial History of Established Hollywood Film Actors on Fifties Prime Time Television" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2001), chap. 2.

26. Clark Roberts, "Milton Berle Comes Back Tonight," *Los Angeles Times*, 26 Sept. 1950; Roberts, "Big Names Spell Surprises for TV," ibid., 1 Oct. 1950; "Ralph Bellamy," *Current Biography, 1951* (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1951), 30–31.

27. Clark Roberts, "Still Much to Be Learned about TV, Sabu Discovers," *Los Angeles Times*, 29 Sept. 1950; Beatrice Foods Co. to Hopalong Cassidy, Inc. [Feb. 1951], Boyd Papers, box 10; Dwight Whitney, "The Inside Story of Hopalong Cassidy," *Coronet* (Dec. 1950): 87–88, copy in ibid., box 112.

28. "Exhibs 'Unfair,' Autry Charges in TV Defense," *Variety*, 27 Sept. 1950, 3, 24.

29. Jack O'Brian, "Jimmy Durante Still the Funniest Man in the World," *New York Journal American*, 2 Nov. 1950, clipping in Isaacs Papers, box 1.

30. Jack Hellman, "Television's Timid Trans Trek," *Variety*, 31 May 1950, 23, 32.

31. Script, *Texaco Star Theater*, 16 Sept. 1952, 11–1, Berle Papers, box 3.

32. Gelbart, *Laughing Matters*, 65.

33. "Flock of Radio Comics May Take TV Plunge in Fall," *Variety*, 7 June 1950, 1; "Friedman, Barstow on Cantor-Allen Series," ibid., 19 July 1950, 25; "Benny Set for TV with No Place to Go?" ibid., 23 Aug. 1950, 36; "Appraising the Video Comics," ibid., 8 Nov. 1950, 29; "Big Time Comics Invade TV," *Life*, 23 Oct. 1950, 81–84, 86; employment agreement and amendment, CBS–Jack Benny, 25 Oct. 1950, Benny Papers, UCLA, box 94; Arthur Altschul, "Jack Benny Considers His Future," *New York Times*, 10 Apr. 1949, copy in ibid., box 89.

34. Robert Strauss, "The Devil Made Him Do It," *Los Angeles Times*, *Calendar*, 26 Feb. 1995, 88.

35. Script, *The Jack Benny Television Show*, 28 Oct. 1950, 3, Benny Papers, UCLA, box 42; Harry MacArthur, "Jack Benny's TV Is Certain, but He's Moving to It Carefully," *Washington Star*, 26 Feb. 1950, clipping in ibid., box 89.

36. [NBC] memo, Robert D. Daubenspeck to H. M. Beville Jr. 15 May 1953, copy in House TV Inquiry hearings, box 766.

37. Walter Ames, "Top Names Are Still on Radio, and More Sets Sold Than Ever, Funeral Called Off," *Los Angeles Times*, 22 Nov. 1953; Evelyn Bigsby, "Year of Decision," *Radio and Television Life*, 30 Oct. 1949, 33, clipping in Jack Benny Papers, UCLA, box 90; "Farewell to Radio," *Newsweek*, 29 Aug. 1955, 71.

38. J. Walter Thompson to Benny, 13 Oct. 1959, Benny Papers, UCLA, box 87.

39. Roland E. Lindbloom, "Benny Past and Present Master of Situation Comedy," *Newark News*, 21 Mar. 1954, clipping in Benny Papers, UCLA, box 89; "Benny Fiddles—And No One Burns," *TV Guide*, 19 Nov. 1955, 15.

40. Keenan Wynn and James Brough, *Ed Wynn's Son* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959), 194.

41. Becker, "Industrial History," 157.

42. Lester W. Malitz to Niles Trammell, 11 July 1949, and Trammell to Malitz, 13 July 1949, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 593.

43. Thompson, *Bing*, 182–83; Wynn and Brough, *Ed Wynn's Son*, 194. Crosby even rejected appearing in three commercials introducing 1957 Fords, an ad agent reported, "on the grounds of 'too much exposure.'" Memo, Cornwell Jackson to Donaldson B. Thorburn, 27 Aug. 1956, Seymour Papers, box 34.

44. Hal Humphrey, "Benny Funny in Color, Too," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 11 Mar. 1955.

45. Benny, "From Vaudeo to Video via Radio," *Collier's*, 24 Mar. 1951, 81; Jack Benny and Joan Benny, *Sunday Nights*, 279–80. See also employment agreement, CBS–Jack Benny, 25 Oct. 1950, Benny Papers, UCLA, box 94; Bob Thomas, "Benny to Appear on Regular TV Program," *St. Louis Post–Dispatch*,

7 Sept. 1950, clipping in ibid., box 89; John Daniels, "Bountiful Benny," *TV World*. Aug. 1953, 76, clipping in ibid., box 90; Goodman Ace, "The Cobalt Blues," *Saturday Review*, 20 Jan. 1951, 30–31.

46. Ball to Faye Emerson, [ca. July 1951], Emerson Papers, box 2.

47. Nelson, *Ozzie*, 213; Thomas M. Pryor, "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet," *New York Times*, 23 Nov. 1952; E. P. Genock, 5 May 1958, Seymour Papers, box 28.

48. Wynn and Brough, *Ed Wynn's Son*, 225.

49. "Hitchcock Speaking," *Cosmopolitan*, 141 (Oct. 1956), 67.

50. Juliet Benita Colman, *Ronald Colman: A Very Private Person* (New York: William Morrow, 1975), 262–65, 267–68; Walter Ames, "Ronald, Benita Colman Sign for Video Halls of Ivy Half-Hour Films," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 Apr. 1954; "'Ivy' Deal May Hit $10,000,000 Under 5-Yr. Vidpix Pact," *Variety*, 7 Apr. 1954, 39.

51. Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, "Blacks, Loyalty, and Motion-Picture Propaganda in World War II," *Journal of American History* 73 (Sept. 1986): 383–406; Barbara Dianne Savage, *Broadcasting Freedom: Radio, War, and the Politics of Race, 1938–1948* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), chap. 3; Lary May, *The Big Tomorrow: Hollywood and the Politics of the American Way* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 144; Donald Meckiffe and Matthew Murray, "Radio and the Black Soldier during World War II," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 15 (Dec. 1998): 337–56.

52. F. J. McFarland to Richard M. Goldwater, 20 Feb. 1947, Benny Papers, UCLA, box 98; Benny and Benny, *Sunday Nights*, 103–8.

53. Sidney H. Eiges to Henry Lee Moon, 4 Feb. 1955, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 169; J. Fred MacDonald, *Blacks and White TV; African Americans in Television since 1948*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1992), 3, 19–22; Donald Bogle, *Primetime Blues; African Americans on Network Television* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 13–15, 19; minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 8 Dec. 1952, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 835.

54. Memo, Stockton Helffrich to Sydney Eiges, 14 Apr. 1955, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 169.

55. John Leonard, *A Really Big Show: A Visual History of the Ed Sullivan Show* (New York: Viking, 1992), 46; Bogle, *Primetime Blues*, 42, 57; "Television Follow-Up," *Variety*, 15 Sept. 1948, 30; "Kate Smith Show Wins Praise for Integration," *Chicago Defender*, 30 Jan. 1954; "Out of Hearts of Stars Came TV and Radio Bids to Sepia Artists," ibid., 2 Jan. 1954; "Eddie Fisher Swats Bias on His TV Bill," ibid., 22 May 1954, clippings in NBC Papers, WHS, box 165; scripts, *Your Show of Shows*, 1 Apr. 1950, and 1 Dec. 1951, Liebman Papers, box 12; Ted Sennett, *Your Show of Shows* (New York: Collier Books, 1977), 154; Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 72–74.

56. Herbert G. Goldman, *Banjo Eyes: Eddie Cantor and the Birth of Modern Stardom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 277–78; Virginia Rapp to Sylvester L. Weaver Jr., 23 Jan. 1955, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 169. See also Numan V. Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race Politics in the South during the 1950's* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969); memo, Stockton Helffrich to Continuity Acceptance Personnel, 10 Sept. 1951, NBC, CART Papers.

57. Alvin "Chick" Webb, "Is the Color Line Fading in Radio, TV Industry," *Amsterdam News*, ca. Dec. 1954, clipping in Senate TV Inquiry, box 718; MacDonald, *Blacks and White TV,* 50, 54. ABC sources claimed the Davis pilot simply lacked promise. See Fred Silverman, "An Analysis of ABC Television Network Programming from February 1953 to October 1959" (master's thesis, Ohio State University, 1959), 96–97.

58. Alvin "Chick" Webb, "Mid-Summer Madness," *New York Amsterdam News*, 17 July 1954, clipping in NBC Papers, WHS, box 165; minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 24 Mar. 1952, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 835.

59. Bogle, *Primetime Blues*, 32–36; Melvin Patrick Ely, *The Adventures of Amos 'n' Andy; A Social History of an American Phenomenon* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 213–38; Thomas Cripps, "*Amos 'n' Andy* and the Debate over American Racial Integration," in *American History/American Television*, 33–54. On shifting African American memories of the program, see Henry Louis Gates Jr., "An 'Amos 'n' Andy' Christmas," *New York Times*, 23 Dec. 1994.

60. Robinson to Ernest de la Ossa, 4 Feb. 1954, and "Fair Fan Sees Jackie as Great Radio or TV Influence When Career Is Ended," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 1 May 1954, clipping in NBC Papers, WHS, box 165.

61. Inger L. Stole, "Nat King Cole and the Politics of Race and Broadcasting in the 1950s," *Communication Review* 1 (1996): 357, 361–68; "Pioneer," *Time*, 15 July 1957, 66; memo, George Norford to Sydney Eiges, 7 June 1955, in NBC Papers, box 169; Bogle, *Primetime Blues*, 57–68, 74–77, 86–88; MacDonald, *Blacks and White TV,* 65–67; J. P. Shanley, "TV Boycott on Negro Job Bias," *New York Times*, 21 Feb. 1955.

62. MacDonald, *Blacks and White TV,* 48.

63. Clark Roberts, "National Theater for U.S. through Influence of TV," *Los Angeles Times*, 7 Oct. 1950; George Rosen, review, *Variety*, 13 Sept. 1950, 35; Ely, *Adventures of Amos 'n' Andy*, 212–13, 231–32.

64. Robert Coughlan, "Now It Is Trouble That Is Supercolossal in Hollywood," *Life*, 13 Aug. 1951, 104–5; untitled story on Dore Schary of MGM, *Los Angeles Examiner*, 9 May 1952, Hearst Collection.

65. Sarnoff to Lawrence H. Rogers II, 24 Aug. 1955, copy in KOMU Papers, folder 154. Affiliates continued to complain about movie plugs. See memo, David C. Adams to Thomas A. McAvity, 26 Sept. 1955, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 948.

66. *Letters of Nunnally Johnson*, ed. Dorris Johnson and Ellen Leventhal (New York: Knopf, 1981), 56–57.

67. John Mitchell to William Roach, 11 Jan. 1949, United Artists Papers, record group 2, box 52; William Lafferty, "'No Attempt at Artiness, Profundity, or Significance': *Fireside Theatre* and the Rise of Filmed Television Programming," *Cinema Journal* 27 (Fall 1987): 25–26, 28–29; "Tele Film for Television," *Newsweek*, 26 Jan. 1948, 54, 56.

68. "Exhibs 'Unfair,' Autry Charges"; Abel Green, "TV to Provide Market for 5,000 Hours of Pix in a Few Years, Paley Predicts," *Variety*, 26 Jan. 1949, 20.

69. Both NBC and CBS wooed Mankiewicz, while NBC negotiated with Huston. Memo, Robert W. Ballin to John L. McGuigg, 6 Jan. 1956, Radio and Television Department, box 11, Thompson Papers; memos, William S. Paley to Frank Stanton and J. L. Van Volkenburg, 22 July 1955; Paley to Stanton, 24 Sept. 1953, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 756.

70. Samuel Goldwyn, "Is Hollywood Through?" *Collier's*, 29 Sept. 1951, 18–19. Hollywood's advantages in film production are outlined in Everett Crosby, "Film Package Syndication for Television," in *Television Advertising and Production Handbook*, ed. Irving Settel and Norman Glenn, 312–15 (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1953).

71. "Movies: New Sick Industry," *Business Week*, 25 Nov. 1950, 26; John Houseman, "Battle over Television," *Harper's*, May 1950, 56–57; Samuel Goldwyn, "Hollywood in the Television Age," *Hollywood Quarterly* 4 (1949–50): 147–49; Timothy R. White, "Life after Divorce: The Corporate Strategy of Paramount Pictures Corporation in the 1950s," *Film History* 2 (1988): 111–13.

72. Wynn and Brough, *Ed Wynn's Son*, 205; Tino Balio, *United Artists: The Company That Changed the Film Industry* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 87; John Houseman, "Hollywood Faces the Fifties," *Harper's*, Apr. 1950, 52; "Warners to Trim Production for 90 Days," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 5 Mar. 1953, Hearst Collection; L. K. Sidney to Dore Schary [4 Aug. 1952], Schary Papers, box 19.

73. Quoted in Budd Schulberg, "The Frightened City," *Nation's Business*, Aug. 1949, 36.

74. Emphasis added. Association of Television Film Distributors, Inc., "Presentation before the Network Study Group of the FCC," 31 May 1956, 47–48, copy in Senate TV Inquiry, box 693. The document was presented on behalf of four TV producers. They had been reluctant to issue these charges in public for fear of retribution. See memos to files, Herbert N. Maletz, 14 Aug. 1956, box 758, and Sidney Davis to Warren Magnuson, 18 May 1955, box 700, Senate TV Inquiry. Less coercive coparticipation is discussed in memo, Len White to Dan Seymour, 13 Feb. 1957, Seymour Papers, box 8, ibid., and Leonard Traube, "Time Is of the Essence," *Variety*, 30 Nov. 1955, 33. Not one of the networks indicated it would reject a potentially popular program because

it did not have a proprietary stake in it. See, for example, NBC, "Response to Network Questionnaire," 13, n.d., Senate TV Inquiry, box 709.

75. *The Jack Benny Program*, 6 Dec. 1953, had been filmed July 2. It was apparently the first recorded Benny show. Script, Benny Papers, UCLA, box 43.

76. Script, *The George Burns Show*, 16 Dec. 1958, 2, Amateau Papers, box 14.

77. J. Walter Thompson to Benny, 13 Oct. 1959.

78. Milton MacKaye, "The Big Brawl: Hollywood vs. Television," *Saturday Evening Post*, 26 Jan. 1952, 120.

79. Coughlan, "Now It Is Trouble," 108; "Tele Film for Television," 54, 56.

80. Sidney N. Strotz to Hal Roach, 10 Dec. 1948, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 586. See also memos, Strotz to Niles Trammell, 1 Dec. 1948, and Noran E. Kersta to Strotz, 3 Dec. 1948, ibid.

81. Aline Mosby, "Pioneer Once Thought Mad," *Los Angeles Herald and Express*, 4 June 1953, Hearst Collection; memo, Al Morrison to John Devine, 24 Sept. 1956, Radio and Television Department Records, box 1, Thompson Papers.

82. Lafferty, "No Attempt at Artiness," 30–31; Edward T. Thompson, "There's No Business Like MCA Business," *Fortune*, July 1960, 119.

83. Leonard Traube, "Time Is of the Essence," *Variety*, 30 Nov. 1955, 44.

84. Dan Seymour to W. B. Potter, 15 Nov. 1956, Seymour Papers, box 28; testimony of Ozzie Nelson and Desi Arnaz, Docket 12782, vol. 11, *Proc.*, 23:4300, 24:4478ff, FCC Records, NA; Irving Bernstein, *The Economics of Television Film Production* (Hollywood: Screen Actors Guild, 1960), 59–60.

85. Albert R. Kroeger, "Steady as She Goes Upward," *Television Magazine* (Dec. 1965): 52; Jeb H. Perry, *Screen Gems; A History of Columbia Pictures Television from Cohn to Coke, 1948–1983* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1991), 4–6, 30, 82–83; "The Screen Gems Story," n.d., copy in Seymour Papers, box 7.

86. Richard Schickel, *The Disney Version: The Life, Times, Art, and Commerce of Walt Disney* (New York: Avon, 1968), 240; Dick Williams, "Movie Studios and TV Are Getting Closer," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 26 Apr. 1955; "Here's Your First View of Disneyland," *Look* (2 Nov. 1954), 84; Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV: The Studio System in the Fifties* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 143.

87. Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV*, 157; Thomas M. Pryor, "Hollywood Tie-Up," *New York Times*, 12 Apr. 1955.

88. Draft of ABC announcement of Warner Brothers series, 11, n.d. [Mar. 1955], copy in Warner Brothers Papers.

89. Ibid.

90. Telegram, Kintner to Warner, 13 Oct. 1955, Warner Brothers Papers.

91. "Clouds Thicken over Film Makers' Part in TV Programming," *Advertising Age*, 31 Oct. 1955, 73; Charles R. Abry to Daniel Seymour, 17 Apr. 1956, Radio and Television Department Records, box 3, Thompson Papers;

telegrams, Robert E. Kintner to Jack L. Warner, 14 Sept., 16 Sept., 21 Sept., and 28 Sept. 1955, Warner Brothers Papers.

92. "Weekly MGM TV Program to Start on ABC in Fall," *New York Herald Tribune*, 22 June 1955.

93. *Advertising Age*, 24 Oct. 1955, 67. See also Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV*, 189; Silverman, "Analysis of ABC," 154.

94. [AM], "Eastman Kodak Company—Investigation of Nighttime Availabilities," Seymour Papers, box 25. MGM altered *Parade*'s format, to no avail. Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV*, 212.

95. Thomas Schatz, *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era* (New York: Pantheon, 1988), 477; "Twentieth Century-Fox Retools Studio for Teevee," *Los Angeles Herald and Express*, 14 Feb. 1955, Hearst Collection; "Fox Adding Plant for TV Recording," *New York Times*, 14 Nov. 1955.

96. The three large studios lost just under $3 million in their first year of TV production. See Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV*, 212.

97. Transcription of Dore Schary Seminar at the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, 39; "KTTV Gets 725 MGM Films for Telecasting," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 15 Apr. 1956, "MGM Enters Television; Frees Films," ibid., 21 June 1956, Henry Sutherland, "Hollywood Conquest by TV Nears Finish," ibid., 22 June 1956, "Sarnoff Warns TV on 'Film Invasion,'" ibid., 14 Dec. 1956, all in Hearst Collection; memo, Ruth Jones to Arthur Porter et al., 4 Oct. 1956, Radio and Television Department, box 4, Thompson Papers.

98. Warner to Cooper, 28 Oct. 1955, Warner Brothers Papers.

99. Ibid.; Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV*, 165; Michele Hilmes, *Hollywood and Broadcasting: From Radio to Cable* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 57, 66.

100. Average daily use in 1950 was 4 hours, 35 minutes; five years later it had climbed to 4 hours 51 minutes. Christopher H. Sterling and Timothy R. Haight, *The Mass Media: Aspen Institute to Communication Industry Trends* (New York: Praeger, 1978), 366.

101. Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV*, 159.

102. Erskine Johnson, "Hollywood on TV."

103. Freeman Lincoln, "The Comeback of the Movies," *Fortune*, Feb. 1955, 127–31, 155; Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV*, 157–60. See also Richard E. Caves, *Creative Industries; Contracts between Art and Commerce* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 94–95; Balio, *United Artists*, 88.

104. MacKaye, "Big Brawl."

105. Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV*, 159, 161, 219; Schatz, *Genius of the System*, 478; Axel Madsen, *Billy Wilder* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), 109.

106. Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV,* 173, 212, 213, 221–22; Bernstein, *Economics of Television*, chap. 4; Kroeger, "Steady," 52.

107. Telegrams, Warner to Kintner, 28 Sept. 1955; Kintner to Warner 23 Sept. 1955, Warner Brothers Papers. See also Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV,* 180, 194.

108. Memo, E. P. Genock to F. R. Holtz, 7 Feb. 1956, Seymour Papers, box 28.

109. "Clouds Thicken," 73. See also Robert Cunniff, "Mediocrity's Mahatma," *Show Business Illustrated* 1 (19 Sept. 1961): 48.

110. Vance Bourjaily, "The Lost Art of Writing for Television," *Harper's,* Oct. 1959, 157.

111. Bob Williams, "TV Debut of 'Warner Brothers Presents,'" n.d., clipping Warner Brothers Papers. "B" films were, in fact, still being produced in the 1950s, though not by Warner Brothers. See Tino Balio, *United Artists*, 119–24.

112. Review of *Bourbon Street Beat*, *Variety* 30 Sept. 1959, 29. In producing TV series, Warner Brothers deliberately drew on its experience making B films in the 1930s. See Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV,* 174–75, 180–81.

113. "The Factories," *Television Magazine* (Sept. 1963): 73–74; Eric Hodgins, "Amid Ruins of an Empire a New Hollywood Arises," *Life*, 10 June 1957, 164; Mark Alvey, "The Independents: Rethinking the Television Studio System," in *The Revolution Wasn't Televised: Sixties Television and Social Conflict*, ed. Lynn Spigel and Michael Curtin, 140, 144–55 (New York: Routledge, 1997); Irving Bernstein, *Economics of Television*, 16.

114. Becker, "Industrial History," 153–74; John Maynard [title clipped], profile of Powell, *Los Angeles Examiner,* 14 Mar. 1954; "4 Star to Lease Studios," ibid., 9 May 1959, Hearst Collection; Edwin H. James, "The Boss Is His Biggest Star," *Television Magazine* (Sept. 1962): 50. In October 1960, Powell offered his own history of Four Star in Docket 12782, vol. 11, *Proc.*, 23:4207, 4210ff, FCC Records, NA.

115. The MCA waiver fueled Hollywood conspiracy theories, largely because SAG president Ronald Reagan subsequently profited from a TV deal MCA negotiated. But such theories overstate Reagan's role. Some authors have similarly overstated the impact of MCA's entry into TV production. TV's move to film would have occurred with or without MCA's participation. For the most balanced assessment of the waiver, see David F. Prindle, *The Politics of Glamour: Ideology and Democracy in the Screen Actors Guild* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 79–81. More conspiracy-minded are Garry Wills, *Reagan's America: Innocents at Home* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1987), 263ff, and especially Dennis McDougal, *The Last Mogul: Lew Wasserman, MCA, and the Hidden History of Hollywood* (New York: Crown, 1998), 187–91.

116. Nat Hentoff, "The Octopus of Show Biz," *Reporter* 25 (23 Nov. 1961): 42.

117. Foote, Cone, and Belding, "Edsel—'Wagon Train,'" 19 Sept. 1957, Cone Papers, box 44; McDougal, 158–60, 188, 190, 219.

118. McDougal, *Last Mogul*, 202–3.

119. Edward T. Thompson, "There's No Show Business Like MCA's Business," *Fortune*, July 1960, 115–16; Connie Bruck, *When Hollywood Had a King: The Reign of Lew Wasserman, Who Leveraged Talent into Power and Influence* (New York: Random House, 2003), 131–32, 134, 181. Kintner's denial of the *Fortune* story is included in testimony before the FCC, Docket 12782, vol. 19, *Proc.*, 57:8775ff, FCC Records, NA.

120. John Frankenheimer, oral history, 1982, 1–2A, DGA.

121. William L. Bird Jr., *"Better Living": Advertising, Media, and the New Vocabulary of Business Leadership, 1935–1955* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1999), 118–19, 188–90. On the radio drama of the 1930s and 1940s, see R. LeRoy Bannerman, *Norman Corwin and Radio; The Golden Years* (University: University of Alabama Press, 1986), and Howard Blue, *Words at War: World War II Era Radio Drama and the Postwar Broadcasting Industry Blacklist* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2002).

122. *JWT News*, 23 Feb. 1948, 2, Thompson Papers. See also John Crosby's positive review of an early Kraft production, "Five Times Five," *New York Herald Tribune*, 16 Apr. 1948.

123. Memo, Thomas A. McAvity to John K. Herbert, 2 Sept. 1953, copy in House TV Inquiry hearings, box 766; Advertest Research, *Television Audience of Today* 4 (Mar. 1952): 2, 5, copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 193; Jon Krampner, *The Man in the Shadows: Fred Coe and the Golden Age of Television* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 43.

124. *G.E. Theater* frequently originated from New York. McDougal, *Last Mogul*, 190. Ratings data in Brooks and Marsh, *Complete Directory to Prime Time*, 1258–59, and E. A. Hosp to Barton, 10 Apr. 1952, Barton Papers, box 75; Docket 12782, vol. 14, *Proc.*, 37:5646, FCC Records, NA.

125. Quoted in Lafferty, "No Attempt at Artiness," 23. See also ibid., 35–36.

126. Memo, Genock to Holtz, 7 Feb. 1956, Seymour Papers, box 28. See also Genock, report on meeting, *Screen Directors Playhouse*, 18 Jan. 1956, copy in ibid.

127. Rod Serling, *Patterns: Four Television Plays* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), 7.

128. Buzz Kulik, oral history, 1982, 7, DGA. According to *Variety*, the per episode costs of *Philco Playhouse* were $23,000 and for *Studio One*, $16,500, compared to $50,000 for *Four Star Revue* and $40,000 for *The Texaco Star Theater*. All were sixty-minute programs. See *Variety*, 15 Nov. 1950, 35, 38.

129. Memos, John K. Herbert to Thomas A., McAvity, 2 Sept. 1953; S. L. Weaver Jr. to David Sarnoff, 18 Sept. 1953, copies in House TV Inquiry hearings, box 766.

130. *Worthington Miner*, 17ff, 55–105; Krampner, *Man in the Shadows*, 6–8, 10–12, 19–20, 23; Susan King, "Coe, Giant of TV Drama, to Be Remembered," *Los Angeles Times*, 14 Mar. 2000.

131. Harriet Van Horne, "Television in the Round," *Theatre Arts* 35 (Nov. 1951): 48–49, 84–85; "He Makes the Small Screens Big," *Kansas City Star*, 22 Jan. 1953; Kisseloff, *The Box*, 266.

132. "Rise and Fall of Hour Dramas," *Variety*, 20 July 1955, 36, offers a critical ranking of the anthologies.

133. John Crosby, "Big Business Epic," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 10 Feb. 1955.

134. Hal Humphrey, "New York Tops in Drama," ibid., 17 Feb. 1955.

135. Krampner, *Man in the Shadows*, 41; Fred Coe, "TV Drama's Declaration of Independence," *Theatre Arts* 38 (June 1954): 31; John Crosby, "The Play's the Thing," *New York Herald Tribune*, 15 Apr. 1948; Max Wilk, *The Golden Age of Television: Notes from the Survivors* (New York: Delta, 1976), 29–32.

136. *Worthington Miner*, 217–19; Kulik, oral history, 8, DGA. Jack Gould's glowing review is reprinted in *Watching Television Come of Age: The New York Times Reviews*, by Jack Gould, ed. Lewis L. Gould (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 39–41.

137. J. Walter Thompson Co. to Serling, 20 Jan. and 24 Aug. 1953; ABC to Serling, 27 May 1954; Serling to the Theatre Guild, 27 May 1955, Serling Papers, UCLA, box 7; Gorham Kindem, *The Live Television Generation of Hollywood Film Directors: Interviews with Seven Directors* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1994), 31–32, 52–53, 167–68; Kisseloff, *The Box*, 235; Krampner, *Man in the Shadows*, 58; Coe, "TV Drama's Declaration," 87; Jack Gould, "Television in Review," *New York Times*, 29 Jan. 1951.

138. Tad Mosel, "Aristotle Live from New York," *Amherst* (Winter 1995): 16.

139. Both Engel and Sander, in their biographies, reveal the impact of military service on Serling and his work. See Engel, *Rod Serling: Dreams and Nightmares of Life in the Twilight Zone* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989), 55, 57, 68–69, and Sander, *Serling*, 55. On Chayefsky's wartime experience, see Shaun Considine, *Mad as Hell: The Life and Work of Paddy Chayefsky* (New York: Random House, 1994), 18–23.

140. Shaun Considine, *Mad as Hell*, 41–42; Blue, *Words at War*, 40–41; Engel, *Rod Serling*, 84–86, 96.

141. Kenneth Hey, "*Marty:* Aesthetics vs. Medium in Early Television Drama," in *American History/American Television*, 101–4; Jack Behar, "On Rod Serling, James Agee, and Popular Culture," in *TV as Art; Some Essays in Criticism*, ed. Patrick D. Hazard, 35 (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1966); Paul Rutherford, *When Television Was Young: Primetime Canada, 1952–1967* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 284–92.

142. Ring Lardner Jr., "T.V.'s New 'Realism,'" *Nation*, 13 Aug. 1955, 132–34.

143. Coe, "TV Drama's Declaration," 87.

144. Fielder Cook, oral history, ca. 1992, 7, DGA; Krampner, *Man in the Shadows*, 72.

145. Fielder Cook, "Why Early TV Was a Golden Era for Drama," *New York Times*, 14 Oct. 1982.

146. Vidal, "Writing Plays for Television," *New World Writing* no. 10 (1956), reprinted in *Homage to Daniel Shays; Collected Essays, 1952–1972*, 32 (New York: Random House, 1972).

147. Serling, *Patterns*, 11.

148. John Crosby, "It Was New and We Were Very Innocent," *TV Guide*, 22 Sept. 1973, 5–6.

149. Gerald Gross to John Houseman, 19 Mar. 1957, Houseman Papers, box 6.

150. Quoted in Shaun Considine, *Mad as Hell*, 64–65; Seldes, "A Clinical Analysis of TV," *New York Times Magazine*, 28 Nov. 1954, 55.

151. *Worthington Miner*, 218–19.

152. Chayefsky, introduction to *Television Plays* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955), ix.

153. Serling, *Patterns*, 16, 18. See also Mosel, "Aristotle Live," 16.

154. Kisseloff, *The Box*, 236.

155. Engel, *Rod Serling*, 104.

156. Kindem, *Live Television*, 53.

157. Krampner, *Man in the Shadows*, 49.

158. "Bright Galaxy of Playwrights," *Life*, 25 Oct. 1954, 81.

159. Kisseloff, *The Box*, 236; Mosel, "Aristotle Live," 16.

160. *Best Television Plays*, ed. Gore Vidal (New York: Ballantine, 1956), 70, 152.

161. Kisseloff, *The Box*, 236, 255–56.

162. Shaun Considine, *Mad as Hell*, 78–83, 100.

163. Sander, *Serling*, 114, 117.

164. Bourjaily, "Lost Art," 154.

165. Leon Morse, "The Hollywood Viewpoint," *Television Magazine* (May 1960): 74.

166. Altschul, "Jack Benny Considers."

167. "Rise and Fall of Hours Dramas," *Variety*, 29 July 1955, 27.

168. Lawrence Laurent, "Wanted: The Complete Television Critic," in *The Eighth Art: Twenty-Three Views of Television Today*, 162 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962).

169. Jack Gould, "TV's Psychodrama," *New York Times*, 7 Aug. 1955. See also letters commenting on Gould's attack in ibid., 14 Aug. 1955.

170. Bourjaily, "Lost Art," 156.

171. Arthur Penn oral history, ca. 1992, 8, DGA.

172. ONS, "Interview with Representatives of CBS, Inc. . . . Oct. 6–9, 1958," [unabridged], 47, Acc. No. 72A1986, box 15, FCC Records, GSA.

173. Bourjaily, "Lost Art," 152.

174. John Crosby, "It Belongs to Us," *New York Herald Tribune*, 16 Feb. 1959; Robinson, remarks, National Press Club, 18 May 1966, Robinson Papers.

175. Bethel Leslie in Kisseloff, *The Box*, 269.

176. Houseman to Jud Kinberg, [ca. Feb. 1960], Houseman Papers, box 8.

177. Sterling and Haight, *Mass Media*, 372–73.

178. J. Walter Thompson Co., "Television-Radio Department Annual Report," 4, 15 Mar. 1958, Radio and Television Department, box 1, Thompson Papers. The ratings are averages for three months per season, in Donald R. Boyle, "An Evaluation and Historical Survey of Kraft Television Theatre, 1947–1958" (master's thesis, Temple University, 1964), 116, 188, 120.

179. Shaun Considine, *Mad as Hell*, 85; Kate Buford, *Burt Lancaster; An American Life* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2000), 150; Ralph Nelson to Alden Schwimmer, 21 Mar. 1960, Ralph Nelson Papers, box 43.

180. Kisseloff, *The Box*, 268.

181. Krampner, *Man in the Shadows*, 6–8, 10–12, 19–20, 61, 68; Coe, "TV Drama's Declaration," 88.

182. A. E. Hotchner, "One Thing after Another—The Adaptation," in *The Eighth Art*, 83; Kisseloff, *The Box*, 266.

183. Michael Kerbel, "The Golden Age of TV Drama," *Film Comment* 15 (July/Aug. 1979): 14–15, 17–19; William Grimes, "A Director's Lasting Debt to a Herd of Herefords," *New York Times*, 18 Jan. 1996; Mosel, "Aristotle Live," 15; Judine Mayerle, "*Kraft Television Theatre* and 'A Night to Remember' (NBC, 1956)," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 7 (1987): 115–28. "Rise and Fall of Hour Dramas," *Variety*, 20 July 1955, 27, offered a thoughtful preliminary critique of the shift to more ambitious productions.

184. John Bartlow Martin, "Television, USA," *Saturday Evening Post*, 28 Oct. 1961, 58. The week of 1 March 1960, *The Untouchables* finished first in Buffalo and third in Boston. It did not finish in the top ten for eight other, smaller markets surveyed by the American Research Bureau. *Variety*, 8 June 1960, 33, and 15 June 1960, 33. On *Playhouse 90*'s plummeting ratings, see notes of interview with Oscar Katz, n.d., Mayer Papers, box 68, and Frank Stanton's testimony in Docket 12782, vol. 19, *Proc.*, 19:8329, FCC Records, NA.

185. Robert Lewis Shayon, "Screens and Screams," *Saturday Review*, 20 Apr. 1963, 44; Caryn James, "A Master of Suspense, with a Touch Like Midas's," *New York Times*, 13 June 1997; Henry Slesar, introduction to *Hitchcock in Prime Time*, ed. Francis M. Nevins Jr. and Martin Harry Greenberg (New York: Avon, 1985), 1–7.

186. Sander, *Serling*, 152–53; Engel, *Rod Serling*, 182; Hey, "*Marty*," 109–11.

187. Steven D. Stark, *Glued to the Set: The 60 Television Shows and Events That Made Us Who We Are Today* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 87–89.

188. "Showdown with Rance McGrew," aired 2 Feb. 1962, rebroadcast on the SciFi Channel, 30 Nov. 1999.

189. Memo, Alan Reitman to Jeff Fuller, 7 May 1963, ACLU Records, box 313; Ida Jeter, "Politics in 'The Defenders,'" in *TV Book: The Ultimate Television Book*, ed. Judy Fireman, 200 (New York: Workman, 1977); Katz interview notes, Mayer Papers; "CBS Yields on NAB 'Preview,'" *Variety*, 25 Apr. 1962, 21. See also Harris Dienstfrey, "Doctors, Lawyers, and Other TV Heroes," *Commentary* 35 (July 1963): 522–23; David Boroff, "Television and the Problem Play," in *TV as Art*, 109–15; Docket 12782, vol. 19, *Proc.*, 54:8358–60, FCC Records, NA; Ida Glenn Jeter, "An Analysis of Selected Episodes of *The Defenders*, 1961–65" (master's thesis, University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1972); Doherty, *Cold War*, 240–44.

190. Many of these letters are in Serling's papers at the Wisconsin Historical Society. Among the fans of *The Twilight Zone* were this author and his best friend, as well as the author's brother and our maternal grandparents. None of us ever wrote annoying letters to Serling.

191. Engel, *Rod Serling*, 269–70.

192. Sander, *Serling*, 1–7, 205–6; Engel, *Rod Serling*, 189. Serling was pitching *The Loner* early in 1960. Bert Granet to Serling, 14 Mar. 1960, Serling Papers, WHS, box 10.

193. "Life Begins at 39," *Newsweek*, 13 Apr. 1959, 98; script, *The Jack Benny Program*, 18, 38, 16 Oct. 1960, Benny Papers, UCLA, box 49.

194. Lewis's first show, in 1963, is considered one of the greatest disasters in the history of TV. "It was so bad we had to take it off the air and buy him out," confessed ABC chairman Leonard Goldenson. Docket 16828, vol. 8, *Proc.*, 31:1481, FCC Records, GSA. See also Robert Strauss, "The Devil," 88. Having watched the Lewis premiere program, I can attest to that judgment. Crosby did a weekly situation comedy on ABC in 1964 that lasted one season. Stewart's program similarly ran one year, as did an occasional ninety-minute drama, *Hawkins*, he did two years later. See also Bernard Weinraub, "Two Mediums Make Like One," *New York Times*, 19 July 1998.

195. Cecil Smith, "Booming Hollywood May Become TV Capital, Too," *Los Angeles Times*, 2 Oct. 1955.

196. "Network Adds Big Buildings," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 23 June 1957, "ABC's New TV Center Start Due," ibid., 1 Aug. 1957, "Sept. 8–14 to Be TV Week," ibid., 6 Sept. 1957, Hearst Collection; Oscar Godbout, "TV Film Industry Thrives on Coast," *New York Times*, 2 Jan. 1956.

197. George Rosen, "TV's Illegitimate Theatre," *Variety*, 15 June 1960, 23. According to Rosen, up to a third of Columbia's schedule originated in New York, while ABC had only one New York–produced series, the filmed *Naked*

City. See also Thomas E. Weakley, "TV Goes Hollywood," *Printers' Ink*, 23 Aug. 1957, 19; George Rosen, "Television's 'West Side Story,'" *Variety*, 13 Nov. 1957, 29.

198. George Rosen, "TV's Illegitimate Theatre."

199. Stark, *Glued to the Set*, 88.

200. Marx to Bergen Evans, 27 Feb. 1959, Marx Papers, box 1.

Chapter 8. The Patrons

Epigraph: Sylvester L. Weaver Jr., speech to NBC-TV Affiliates, 9 Dec. 1955, 5, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 948.

1. Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Harry Field, *The People Look at Radio* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1946), 16–24, 129; Lazarsfeld and Patricia L. Kendall, *Radio Listening in America* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1948), 59–64, 121; Kathy Newman, *Radio Active: Advertising and Consumer Activism, 1935–1947* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Michael Kammen, *The Lively Arts: Gilbert Seldes and the Transformation of Cultural Criticism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 250–51; R. N. Williams II to Edward L. Bernays, 10 Nov. 1953, Historical Society of Pennsylvania Institutional Archive. Of those surveyed by Lazarsfeld and Kendall, *Radio Listening*, 121, 76 percent preferred advertising to an annual fee.

2. Marya Mannes, *Who Owns the Air?* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1960), 6.

3. "Five Types of Television 'Commercials,'" *Printers' Ink*, 28 Apr. 1944, 21; Thomas D'A. Brophy to W. H. Vanderploeg, 6 May 1949, Brophy Papers, box 43. See also James Schwoch, "Selling the Sight/Site of Sound: Broadcast Advertising and the Transition from Radio to Television," *Cinema Journal* 30 (Fall 1990): 55–66.

4. *The Esso Newsreel* appeared three times a week in 1946, then once a week as *The Esso Reporter.* Edward Bliss Jr., *Now the News: The Story of Broadcast Journalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 222.

5. G. Taylor Urquhart, "Television's Impact on the Advertising Business," *Printers' Ink*, 20 May 1949, 29; Lawrence R. Samuel, *Brought to You By: Postwar Television Advertising and the American Dream* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 4.

6. "Borden to Drop Network Radio," *Tide*, 17 Feb. 1950, 31–32, 34. On the wisdom of early TV spot advertising, see Robert M. Reuschle, "Choosing the Right TV Station for Your Product," in *Television Advertising and Production Handbook*, ed. Irving Settel and Norman Glenn (N.Y.: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1953), 35.

7. "Chevrolet's TV Advertising," *Tide*, 17 Feb. 1949, 34; Urquhart, "Television's Impact," 29; ONS, interview with Douglas L. Smith . . ., S. C. Johnson and Son., Inc., 6 Sept. 1961, Acc. No. 72A1986, box 4, FCC Records, GSA.

8. Memo, William A. Chalmers to Members of the Plan Board et al., 21 Oct. 1949, Brophy Papers, box 51.

9. *Printers' Ink*, 24 Mar. 1950, 70.

10. "Chevrolet's TV Advertising," 31.

11. See, for example, Jerry Walker, "58 Percent of TV Families Earn Less than $5,000," *Editor and Publisher*, 18 June 1949, 46, and Charles E. Swanson and R. D. Jones, "Television Owning and Its Correlates," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 35 (Oct. 1951): 352–57.

12. "Chevrolet's TV Advertising," 34.

13. "Good Humor Sells via Four NYC TV Stations," *Tide*, 1 Aug. 1952, 49.

14. Jim Owens, "Retailers Tie-Ins Sell Hats," *Television Magazine* (May 1949): 14.

15. Kenyon and Eckhardt, "Television Newsletter," 21 Oct. 1949, copy in Brophy Papers, box 51.

16. E. Lawrence Deckinger, "Conducting Research for TV Advertising," in *Television Advertising and Production Handbook*, ed. Irving Settel and Norman Glenn, 57 (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1953).

17. NBC, *The Hofstra Study*, n.d. [1950], copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 188; memo, E. F. England to H. M. Beville Jr., 24 Sept. 1948, ibid., box 586.

18. NBC Television, *Television Today: Its Impact on People and Products* (1951), copy in NBC Papers, box 189, WHS; Thomas E. Coffin to Hal Smith, 21 Sept. 1951, box 188, ibid.

19. Sid Caesar and Bill Davidson, *Where Have I Been? An Autobiography* (New York: Crown, 1982), 89–90; "Television in 1952," *Tide*, 16 Sept. 1949, 44.

20. George Rosen, "Revolt of the TV Advertiser," *Variety*, 25 Mar. 1953, 1, 50.

21. "Chevrolet's TV Advertising," 31–32.

22. "The Year in Radio-Television," *Tide*, 23 Dec. 1949, 45. See also "Agencies in TV," *Tide*, 4 Nov. 1949, 35.

23. "Where Does Continuity in Advertising Stand Today?" *Printers' Ink*, 28 Apr. 1950, 25–27. See also George J. Abrams, "TV Advertising for the National Sponsor," in *Television Advertising*, 79.

24. Advertest Research, "The Alternate Week Television Program," *Television Audience of Today* 3 (June 1951): pp. III, 2, 6, copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 193.

25. Melvin Patrick Ely, *The Adventures of Amos 'n' Andy; A Social History of an American Phenomenon* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 238.

26. Howard M. Teichmann to John Houseman, n.d. [early Mar. 1950], Houseman Papers, box 3.

27. Weaver, opening remarks, NBC-TV Affiliates Meeting, 31 Aug. 1954, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 938; Sylvester L. Weaver Jr., "Television 1953: The Case for the Networks," *Television Magazine* (Jan. 1953): 17.

28. Memo, John K. Herbert to Thomas A. McAvity, 2 Sept. 1953, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 766.

29. Bart Andrews, *The Story of "I Love Lucy"* (New York: Popular Library, 1977), 151–53; "Medic Hurts Lucy," *Business Week*, 26 Mar. 1955, 54; notes of interview with Sid Masebov, n.d., Mayer Papers, box 19.

30. George J. Abrams, "TV Advertising for the National Sponsor," in *Television Advertising*, 73; Martin Mayer, *Madison Avenue, U.S.A.* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1958), 204–5; "The Agency Return to Program Control," *Sponsor*, 27 Oct. 1956, 27; "TV Programming: Why Have Ad Agencies Given up Their Roles as Producers?" *Printers' Ink*, 16 Jan. 1959, 33–34; Warren Weldon to Tom Sutton, 5 Sept. 1958, Radio and Television Dept., box 13, Thompson Papers; film production contract, Raydic Corporation and National Broadcasting Co., Inc. [15 June 1954], 18A, copy in House TV Inquiry hearings, box 763; remarks of Robert Foreman of BBDO, Docket 12782, vol. 2, *Proc.*, 5:605, and Weaver, ibid., vol. 16, *Proc.*, 43:6531, FCC Records, NA. According to the FCC's ONS, advertisers produced 35.6 percent of all network evening programming. See FCC, *Second Interim Report by the Office of Network Study, Television Network Program Procurement*, pt. 2 (Washington, D.C.: 1965), 726–27.

31. FCC, *Second Interim Report*, 736.

32. Weaver speech to Chicago Economic Club, 15 June 1953, 7, Hedges Collection.

33. Weaver, opening remarks, NBC-TV Affiliates meeting, 31 Aug. 1954, 4, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 938, speech to NBC-TV Affiliates Meeting, 9 Dec. 1955, 3, ibid., folder 948. See also "NBC Magazine Concept for TV," *Variety*, 18 Feb. 1953, 27.

34. Richard A. R. Pinkham, address to NBC TV Affiliates, 31 Aug. 1954, 3, Hedges Collection.

35. FCC, *Second Interim Report*, 736.

36. Script, *The Milton Berle Show*, 29 Nov. 1955, copy in Eddie Cantor Papers, box 7. The decline of full sponsorship was more apparent when controlling for total evening hours as opposed to individual programs. Between the spring and fall of 1955, the percentage of full sponsorship programs fell from 70.0 to 58.0 percent. See J. Walter Thompson Co.—Chicago, Television Department Report—Nov. 1955, "Television Sponsorship Trends," Seymour Papers, box 1.

37. Memo, Seymour to Norman Strouse, 21 Nov. 1956, Radio Television Department, box 5, Thompson Papers; teletype, White and Wierun to Birmingham, Jackson, and Cooper, ca. March 1956, ibid., box 11; minutes, Friday Meeting with Management Committee, n.d., [Dec. 1956], ibid., box 2. In the late 1950s, Thompson's Hollywood office regularly prepared "screening reports" on individual pilots. See, for example, memo, Len White to Seymour, 23 Apr. 1958, copy in ibid., box 12.

38. The calculation was based on homes within a 40-mile radius of St. Louis. See memo, G.M. Burbach to Joseph Pulitzer II, 22 May 1952, Pulitzer Papers, box 112; NBC, *Hofstra Study*, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 188.

39. Leo Bogart, *The Age of Television*, 3rd ed. (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1972), 114–18; *Tide*, 9 Apr. 1955, 21; Cone, General Foods talk, 17 Feb. 1956, Cone Papers, box 136. The radio and TV diffusion data are in Christopher H. Sterling and Timothy R. Haight, *The Mass Media; Aspen Institute Guide to Communication Industry Trends* (New York: Praeger, 1978), 367, 372.

40. Memo, Herb Fisher to Charles A. Rheinstrom et al., 25 Jan. 1956, Seymour Papers, box 25; "P&G Cuts Daytime Radio Shows on CBS and NBC," *Advertising Age*, 13 June 1955, 1, 68; *Printers' Ink*, 24 Mar. 1950, 70.

41. Thomas Whiteside, "The Man from Iron City," *New Yorker*, 27 Sept. 1969, 60, 86; Bogart, *Age of Television*, 193, 195–96, 209; memo, Jim Luce to Dan Seymour, 30 July 1957, Seymour Papers, box 30. In mid–1955, 92.5 percent of those surveyed found TV commercials to be "interesting or informative." Another poll found that only 8 percent "did not like" commercials. See "What Is the *Real* Public Attitude toward TV Commercials," *ABC Television Research Report* 2 (18 July 1955), copy in KOMU Papers, box 4, and Melvin Arthur Goldberg, "Politics and Television" (master's thesis, Columbia University, 1949), app. D, vii.

42. W. B. Potter to Dan Seymour, 27 July 1956, Seymour Papers, box 27. See also Potter to E. P. Genock, 12 Sept. 1956, ibid.

43. Script, "Ozzie and Harriet Go to Washington," telecast 20 Mar. 1957, 10, 19, 22, Ozzie and Harriet Nelson Papers, box 91; Storrs Haynes to W. B. Potter, 21 Sept. 1956, Seymour Papers, box 27; W. B. Potter, "What Kodak Expects of TV," 1 May 1956, ibid.; memo, E. P. Genock to W. B. Potter, 30 July 1956, ibid.; Dan Seymour to W. B. Potter, 15 Nov. 1956, ibid., box 28.

44. Neil H. Borden and Martin V. Marshall, *Advertising Management: Text and Cases*, rev. ed. (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, 1959), 802–3, 805–9.

45. "Sponsors Appraise TV's Color Spectaculars," *Tide*, 21 May 1955, 22.

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47. Carroll P. Newton to Barton, 13 Sept. 1950, and 9 June 1950, Barton Papers, box 80, and Newton to Dave Danforth, 7 Oct. 1952, ibid., box 81.

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49. Fairfax M. Cone, *With All Its Faults: A Candid Account of Forty Years in Advertising* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), 212–13; Joyce C. Hall, *When You Care Enough* (Kansas City, Mo.: Hallmark, 1979), 214–17, 222; Hall, "There Were No Guideposts along Hallmark's Road," *Broadcasting*, 26 June 1961, 22.

50. Interview with Douglas L. Smith, 6 Sept. 1961, ONS, Acc. No. 72A1986, box 4, FCC Records, GSA.

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52. Robert Alan Aurthur et al., *The Relation of the Writer to Television*, *Occasional Paper on the Role of the Mass Media in the Free Society* (New York: Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, 1960), 3; Robert Horton, "The Economic Squeeze on Mass TV," *Reporter* 22 (28 Apr. 1960): 18; Charles Winick, *Taste and the Censor in Television*, *Occasional Paper on the Role of the Mass Media in the Free Society* (New York: Fund for the Republic, 1959), 26; Serling testimony, Docket 12782, vol. 6, *Proc.*, 9:1623, 1654–55, FCC Records, NA.

53. Contract, Screen Gems, and Kenyon and Eckhardt, 2 Nov. 1954, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 758.

54. Nor should scripts "state that alcoholic beverages are nutritious or have any medicinal or therapeutic qualities." Contract, Screen Gems, Inc., and D'Arcy Advertising Co., [15?] Apr. 1955, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 758.

55. Franklin J. Schaffner in *Worthington Miner: A Directors Guild of America Oral History* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1985), 201; Miner testimony in Docket 12782, vol. 14, *Proc.*, 37:5652, FCC Records, NA.

56. Carroll Newton to Bruce Barton, 11 June 1954, Barton Papers, box 80.

57. Serling to Harry M. Scoble, 10 Mar. 1958, Serling Papers, WHS, box 7–3.

58. Bob Boyer to Herbert W. Beaser, 27 Sept. 1954, Senate TV Inquiry, box 109.

59. "Policies for the Hallmark 'Hall of Fame' Radio and Television Advertising," 18 Jan. 1955, copy in Albert McCleery Papers, box 8.

60. Jean Muir obituary, *New York Times*, 25 July 1996; John Crosby, "Vicious Blacklisting Plagues TV," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 21 June 1955, clipping in NBC Papers, WHS, box 169; David Caute, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 521–28; Merle Miller, *The Judges and the Judged* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1952), 46, 73; John Cogley, *Report on Blacklisting*, 2, *Radio-Television* (New York: Fund for the Republic, 1956), 22–23, 50, 52, 60, 115–24; John Henry Faulk, *Fear on Trial* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), 174–75, 179, 252–53.

61. Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 32–33, 49–59.

62. Schaefer, oral history, 1992, DGA, 16, 37.

63. Jon Krampner, *The Man in the Shadows: Fred Coe and the Golden Age of Television* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 58, 71–72. See also Merle Miller, *Judges*, 93–94. As Krampner notes, 71, Philco in 1953 began following Goodyear's practice of relying on *Red Channels*, though the manu-

facturer did so less rigidly. Crosby, "Vicious Blacklisting," named Philco and Goodyear, along with Kraft, as having "shown great courage in telling the blacklisters to go chase themselves."

64. Merle Miller, *Judges*, 31, 38.

65. Barnouw to Sheldon Meyer, 15 Feb. 1968, Barnouw Papers, box 21.

66. Faulk, *Fear on Trial*, 182. The effect of the Korean War in advancing the blacklist and anti-Communism generally cannot be overstated. See, for example, Merle Miller, *Judges*, 31, 101; Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 113–15.

67. Emphasis added. Robert F. Carney of Foote, Cone, and Belding, quoted in Cogley, *Report on Blacklisting*, 2:199. See also ibid., 50, 53, 102–3 and Caute, *Great Fear*, 525–26.

68. Mark Goodson quoted in Faulk, *Fear on Trial*, 239.

69. Sig Mickelson, *The Decade That Shaped Television News: CBS in the 1950s* (New York: Praeger, 1998), 61–67, 69–70; Merle Miller, *Judges*, 59, 189–93; draft of letter [16 May 1951], Ralph Nelson Papers, box 77.

70. Daniel Mark Epstein, *Nat King Cole* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999), 258–60, 262, 270, 276, 286–89; Inger L. Stole, "Nat King Cole and the Politics of Race and Broadcasting in the 1950s," *Communication Review* 1 (1996): 362–65.

71. Krampner, *Man in the Shadows*, 102–4. Aurthur et al. treat Philco less charitably, see *Relation of the Writer*, 9.

72. Rod Serling, *Patterns: Four Television Plays* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), 20–23, 26; Lawrence Venuti, "Rod Serling, Television Censorship, *The Twilight Zone*," *Western Humanities Review* 35 (Winter 1981): 354–55, 357–61; "Tale of a Script," *Time*, 30 June 1958, 36; Joel Engel, *Rod Serling* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989), 125–26.

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74. Aurthur et al., *Relation of the Writer*, 26.

75. Notes of interview with Weaver [1956], Mayer Papers, box 63.

76. "Sponsors Appraise TV's Color Spectaculars," 21, 23–24; "How Spectacular Were TV's Specs?" *Advertising Age*, 18 Apr. 1955, 3, 52; Robert W. Sarnoff to Raymond Spector, 13 Oct. 1954, copy in Weaver Papers, box 5; telex, Thomas Sarnoff to Weaver, 26 Oct. 1954, copy in ibid.

77. "Sponsors Appraise TV's Color Spectaculars," 24; "How Spectacular Were TV's Specs?" 52.

78. "There's Hope for Programming's Future," *Advertising Age*, 4 Apr. 1955, 70.

79. Minutes, "Ford Car (TV) Review Board, June 30, 1958," copy in Seymour Papers, box 30; memo, Donaldson B. Thorburn to E. J. Reeser, 2 Nov. 1956, copy in ibid.

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81. Memo, Storrs Haynes to John Devine, 12 Sept. 1956, Radio and Television Department, box 1, Thompson Papers; "Call Report: Meeting Mar. 29, 1956," Seymour Papers, box 26.

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Chapter 9. "Informed without Being Ponderous"

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3. Advertest Research, "Television News Programs," *Television Audience of Today*, 7 (Apr. 1955), copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 194.

4. Sidney Fields, "Only Human," *New York Daily Mirror*, 27 Mar. 1956, and Kay Gardella, "Better TV News in '57, Says John Daly," *New York Daily News*, 30 Dec. 1956, clippings in Daly file, NYPL.

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17. Ray Scherer, "Television News in Washington," in *The Press in Washington*, ed. Ray Eldon Hiebert, 97 (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1966).

18. Jack Gould, "TV's News: A Dimout," *New York Times*, 24 July 1955.

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25. "The Early-Evening Program Battle," *Television Magazine* (Sept. 1956): 62, 65; CBS Television Network, untitled exhibits [clearances, May 14–18, 1956], Senate TV Inquiry, box 698.

26. The measurement was based on eight weeks. See Gary A. Steiner, *The People Look at Television: A Study of Audience Attitudes* (New York: Knopf, 1963), 164–65; Frank, *Out of Thin Air*, 91.

27. NBC, Analysis of Programs Broadcast by the NBC Television Network during the Week of Apr. 15–21, 1951 and Apr. 15–21, 1956, Senate TV Inquiry, box 710.

28. Response to Television Questionnaire, Network Affiliates, WSAZ-TV, chap. 3, Senate TV Inquiry, box 717.

29. "Television Has 27-Hour 'Fire' Trial," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 Apr. 1949.

30. "TV-vs.-Newspapers," *Editor and Publisher*, 23 Apr. 1949, 66.

31. George H. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll; Public Opinion, 1935–1971*, 3 vols. (New York: Random House, 1972), 1:672. The same survey showed a majority, 51 percent, "dissatisfied" with the UN.

32. "Network Sound Broadcasting for October 1948," attachment to minutes of Board of Directors meeting, 5 Nov. 1948, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 883.

33. S. L. Weaver to David Sarnoff, 17 Nov. 1949, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 115; report for the [NBC] Board of Directors' meeting, 3 June 1949, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 882; Jack Gould, "Televising the U.N.," *New York Times*, 13 Nov. 1949; "Ford's UN-TV Series," *Tide*, 4 Nov. 1949, 14–15.

34. Minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 11 Sept. 1950, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 839; announcer notation, NBC Master Books, 15 Oct. 1951.

35. CBS did telecast a Security Council meeting in mid–1950. See Philip Hamburger, "Open Hearings," *New Yorker*, 3 Mar. 1951, 83.

36. In February 1934, NBC broadcast the Senate Judiciary Committee's hearings on the lynching of African American men. See Harvard Sitkoff, *New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 267.

37. Edmund Chester, "Red Spy Probe Showed Video at Its Best," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 11 Jan. 1949; Joseph Bruce Gorman, *Kefauver: A Political Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 87; Reports for the Board of Directors' Meeting, 1 July 1949, NBC Papers, LC, folder 882, and 7 May 1948, ibid., folder 885.

38. Ivan Doig, "Kefauver versus Crime: Television Boosts a Senator," *Journalism Quarterly* 39 (Autumn 1962): 484–86; Charles L. Fontenay, *Estes Kefauver: A Biography* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980), 180–81; Ron Garay, "Television and the 1951 Crime Committee Hearings," *Journal of Broadcasting* 22 (Fall 1978): 472–76; Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 110–11. WDSU schedules in *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 15 Jan. and 24 Jan. 1951. See also Ed Brooks, "On the Square," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 26 Jan. and 27 Jan. 1951.

39. Doig, "Kefauver," 487–88; Garay, "Television," 477. A Los Angeles station, still lacking a direct link to the East, aired films of some of the New York proceedings. See Walter Ames, "Bill Anson to Honor Song Dedicated to Memory of GI," *Los Angeles Times*, 20 Mar. 1951.

40. Robert Lewis Shayon, "Senate Crime Hearings Furnish Real-Life Drama," *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 Mar. 1951, reprinted in Shayon, *Open to Criticism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 110, 112. See also Gilbert Seldes, "New Concepts of Television Technique Will Result from the Kefauver Show," *Printers' Ink*, 30 Apr. 1951, 35.

41. Carl Solberg, *Riding High: America in the Cold War* (New York: Mason and Lipscomb, 1973), 199; "Senate Probe Stopped New York's Clock," *Business Week*, 24 Mar. 1951, 21; Garay, "Television," 478–79; William Howard Moore, *The Kefauver Committee and the Politics of Crime 1950–1952* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974), 184–86.

42. Interview by author with Stanley I. Kutler, 22 May 2003.

43. Numan V. Bartley, review of Fontenay, *Kefauver*, *Journal of American History*, 68 (Sept. 1981): 441; memo, Stockton Helffrich to Continuity Acceptance Personnel, 5 Apr. 1951, NBC, CART Reports.

44. John Crosby, "A Jury of 20,000,000," *New York Herald Tribune*, 23 Mar. 1951, reprinted in Crosby, *Out of the Blue: A Book about Radio and Television* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), 251. See also William Benton to Robert Lewis Shayon, 31 Mar. 1951, Shayon Papers, box 10; Benton remarks in *Congressional Record*, vol. 97, pt. 3, 13 Apr. 1951, 3821–22; Hamburger, "Open Hearings," 83; Walter Ames, "Stokey Says Kefauver Crime Hearings Lesson in Civics," *Los Angeles Times*, 24 Mar. 1951.

45. Robert Lewis Shayon, "An Open Letter to the Television Industry," *Saturday Review*, 7 Apr. 1951, reprinted in Shayon, *Open to Criticism*, 107. Legal scholars tended to be more skeptical of the hearings' value. See, for example, "Television and Congressional Investigations," *De Paul Law Review* 1 (Autumn/Winter 1951): 114–15, and Allen T. Klots, "Trial by Television," *Harper's*, Oct. 1951, 90–94.

46. "The Kefauver TV Show," *Commonweal* 53 (30 Mar. 1951): 606; Doherty, *Cold War*, 109.

47. Gorman, *Kefauver*, 88.

48. Memo, George M. Bernbach to Joseph Pulitzer II and Joseph Pulitzer Jr., 2 Apr. 1951, Pulitzer Papers, box 112; minutes of the meeting of the television stations' planning and advisory committee, 3 May 1951, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 756.

49. Minutes of NBC Staff Meeting, 26 Mar. 1951, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 837.

50. Gordon L. Gray, "Television and the National Nominating Conventions of 1952" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1957), 252; Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 187–88.

51. Senate *Status of UHF*, 642.

52. "Army-McCarthy Speaktacular," *Variety*, 28 Apr. 1954, 1, 26; Michael Gauger, "Flickering Images: Live Television Coverage and Viewership of the Army-McCarthy Hearings," *Historian* 67 (Winter 2005): 684–87. See also Percy H. Tannenbaum, "What Effect When TV Covers a Congressional Hearing," *Journalism Quarterly* 32 (Fall 1955): 435. The ratings data are in R. D. Heldenfels, *Television's Greatest Year: 1954* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 128–29.

53. George M. Bernbach to Joseph Pulitzer II, 27 Apr., 29 Apr., and 11 May 1954, Pulitzer Papers, box 108.

54. "'Live' McCarthy Row Television Show Ends," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 25 Apr. 1954, Hearst Collection; Gilbert Seldes, *The Public Arts* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), 235–36; Robert J. Donovan and Ray Scherer, *Unsi-*

lent Revolution: Television News and American Public Life, 1948–1991 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 29–30; George M. Bernbach to Joseph Pulitzer II, 30 Apr. 1954, Pulitzer Papers, box 108; Doherty, *Cold War*, 199–201. Doherty offers the best treatment of the televising of the hearings. After several weeks, Mundt permitted advertising in the form of an announcement before and at the conclusion of each telecast. AP wire story, May 13, 1954, copy in Pulitzer Papers, box 108.

55. John W. Bachman, *The Church in the World of Radio-Television* (New York: Association Press, 1960), 68–69; "NBC, CBS in Tizzy over Preemption Costs on Pickup of McCarthy-Army," *Variety*, 14 Apr. 1954, 1; "'Deluge' of Protests on McCarthy 'Blackout' Smacks NBC Affiliates," *Variety*, 28 Apr. 1954, 26; memo, George M. Bernbach to Joseph Pulitzer II et al., 5 May 1954, Pulitzer Papers, box 108. Individual stations, like Chicago's WBKB, negotiated around Mundt's advertising ban by securing an underwriter. See *Variety*, 28 Apr. 1954, 26. The uneven availability of the hearings can be seen in program logs for April and May 1954 that TV stations submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee, which was investigating juvenile delinquency and the mass media. ABC's Denver affiliate, KBTV, was not carrying the sessions the weeks of April 26 or May 3. These and other schedules are in Senate Delinquency Inquiry, boxes 119 and 120.

56. Gallup, *Gallup Poll*, 2:1201, 1247. Gallup himself believed McCarthy lost the most support among those undecided about his crusade, though the "no opinion" on McCarthy stood at 21 percent in both the December and June polls. See David M. Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy* (New York: Free Press, 1983), 464–65.

57. Bette W. Widder, letter to the editor, *New York Times*, 14 May 2003. See also Ed Bayley, *Joe McCarthy and the Press* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 208–9.

58. Jack Gould, "Disgrace of the Networks," *New York Times*, 31 Oct. 1956. See also "Crisis: Newspapers vs. TV," *Variety*, 7 Nov. 1956, 24.

59. "ABC-TV to Scrap Nearly All Its News, Public Affairs Segment," *Variety*, 2 June 1954, 26.

60. "Tele Brings Dems' National Meet to Philly in '48, Same as GOP," *Variety*, 5 Nov. 1947, 29; Report for the Board of Directors' Meeting, 2 July 1948, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 885; Jay Perkins, "Television Covers the 1952 Political Conventions in Chicago: An Oral History Interview with Sig Mickelson," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 18 (Mar. 1998): 100–101; press releases, NBC, 29 June and 27 July 1948, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 403; memo, Sig Mickelson to Galler et al., 13 Nov. 1951, ibid., box 277.

61. Aline Mosby, "TV Star 'without a Show,'" *New York Telegraph*, 7 Aug. 1952, clipping in Furness file, NYPL. The Democrats earned more air time because their convention ran longer. See Charles A. H. Thomson, *Television and*

Presidential Politics: The Experience in 1952 and the Problems Ahead (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1956), 38–39.

62. Memo, Carleton D. Smith to Warren Wade, 17 June 1948, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 593; Frank, *Out of Thin Air*, 18, 23.

63. Gray, "Television," 106, 250–51; Thomson, *Television and Presidential Politics*, 32n.

64. Robert J. Donovan, *Tumultuous Years: The Presidency of Harry S Truman* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), 396. See also Max Frankel, "Ho hum, Another Last Hurrah," *New York Times Magazine*, 11 July 1976, 10–11.

65. Frank, *Out of Thin Air*, 21–24.

66. Ibid., 9; report for Board of Directors, 2 July 1948, in NBC Papers, LC.

67. Press release, NBC, 19 July 1956, LC.

68. Memo, Carleton D. Smith to Charles Denny, 20 July 1948, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 115; Kisseloff, *The Box*, 361; Frank, *Out of Thin Air*, 12–16.

69. Jay Perkins, "Television," 100–103; Thomson, *Television and Presidential Politics*, 15, 16; Thomas Velotta to Charles Van Devander, 27 Aug. 1951, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 277.

70. Charles Crutchfield to E. P. Shurick, 22 Aug. 1956, Crutchfield Papers, box 3; "Highlights of S. L. Weaver's Report," for NBC board meeting, 2 Sept. 1955, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 870.

71. Diary entry, 21 June 1948, John Shaw Billings Papers; Melvin Goldberg, "Politics and Television," 39–40, 66.

72. *Official Report of the Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention. . . . 1952* (Washington, D.C.: Democratic National Committee, 1952), 247.

73. Miami University, Department of Marketing, "The Influence of Television on the Election of 1952" (Oxford, Ohio, 1954), 35–36; Thomson, *Television and Presidential Politics*, 43–44, 52.

74. David E. Lilienthal, *Venturesome Years, 1950–1955*, vol. 3 of *Journals of David E. Lilienthal* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 330.

75. Memo, Frank Stanton to William S. Paley, 23 June 1948, copy in House TV Inquiry hearings, box 756; Thomson, *Television and Presidential Politics*, 45–46.

76. Thomson, *Television and Presidential Politics*, 52.

77. John Crosby, "Television at the Convention," *New York Herald Tribune*, 23 June 1948, reprinted in Crosby, *Out of the Blue*, 240.

78. Gray, "Television," 262.

79. Gilbert Seldes, *The Great Audience* (New York: Viking Press, 1950), 207.

80. Press release, NBC, 31 July 1956, LC; Gray, "Television," 242–43.

81. Press release, ABC, 21 July 1952, copy in Hinckley Papers, box 87; Gray, "Television," 256.

82. Press release, NBC, 16 Aug. 1956, LC.

83. Press release, NBC, 2 Aug. 1956, LC; Gray, "Television," 248–50, 253; Thomson, *Television and Presidential Politics*, 32.

84. Gray, "Television," 268–69.

85. "Broadcasting Party Conventions," *Literary Digest*, 6 June 1936, 54.

86. Kurt Lang and Gladys Engel Lang, *Politics and Television* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968), chap. 3.

87. Marvin Kitman, "Reuven Frank," *Washington Journalism Review* 4 (July/Aug. 1982): 42.

88. House Investigation, 242.

89. Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), 251.

90. Anne W. Langman, "Television," *Nation*, 8 Sept. 1956, 206–7; Pat Cranston, "Political Convention Broadcasts: Their History and Influence," *Journalism Quarterly* 37 (Spring 1960): 193; Robert MacNeil, *The People Machine: The Influence of Television on American Politics* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 100.

91. See, for example, press release, NBC, 23 July 1956, LC; Frank, *Out of Thin Air*, 60; minutes of the station planning and advisory committee meeting, 29 and 30 Apr. 1952, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 747. Thomson, *Television and Presidential Politics*, 37, reported the camera failed completely. NBC's and CBS's promotion of their convention coverage continued into the 1960s. See ads, *Variety*, 17 June 1964, 32–33; 24 June 1964, 30–31; 8 July 1964, 22–23, 32–33; 19 Aug. 1964, 30–31.

92. Dixon Wecter, "Hearing Is Believing," *Atlantic*, June 1945, 58.

93. Lee Lescaze, "The First Media Megastar," *Wall Street Journal*, 30 June 1986. See also William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 86–90.

94. Leo Bogart, *The Age of Television*, 3rd ed. (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1972), 27.

95. Joseph E. Persico, *Edward R. Murrow: An American Original* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988), 41, 45.

96. Edward R. Murrow, *This Is London* (New York: Schocken, 1985), 147.

97. Cloud and Olson, *Murrow Boys*, 287. See also Bill Leonard, *In the Storm of the Eye: A Lifetime at CBS* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1987), 60.

98. Crosby, "Television at the Convention," 240.

99. "Top of the News," *Newsweek*, 3 Dec. 1951, 58; Persico, *Edward R. Murrow*, 300.

100. Persico, *Edward R. Murrow*, 313.

101. Thomas Russell Wooley Jr., "A Rhetorical Study: The Radio Speaking of Edward R. Murrow" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1957), 76–77.

102. Crosby, "Two Oceans at Once," *New York Herald Tribune*, 23 Nov. 1951, reprinted in Crosby, *Out of the Blue*, 248.

103. Harriet Van Horne, "Murrow Makes the News Live," *New York World-Telegram and Sun*, 19 Nov. 1951, *Journal American* Morgue.

104. "Top of the News"; "Murrow on TV," *Newsweek*, 12 May 1952, 88.

105. Crosby, "Two Oceans at Once," 248.

106. "Wooing the Eggheads for Alcoa," *Business Week*, 19 Dec. 1953, 115–16, 118; Val Adams, "News of TV and Radio," *New York Times*, 21 Nov. 1954; Kathy Pedell, "This Is Murrow," *TV Guide*, 5 Feb. 1955, 4; Seldes, *Public Arts*, 219; "Murrow on TV," 88; Friendly testimony, Docket 12782, vol. 15, *Proc.*, 15:6146, 6154, FCC Records, NA; George David Smith, *From Monopoly to Competition: The Transformations of Alcoa, 1888–1986* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 260, 264, 268.

107. "Top of the News," 58; Alexander Kendrick, *Prime Time: The Life of Edward R. Murrow* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), 339.

108. Charles Wertenbaker, "The World on His Back," *New Yorker*, 26 Dec. 1953, 30, 40. Each crew, Wertenbaker noted, consisted of a reporter, cameraman, and soundman "along with some twenty-five pieces of equipment, which are worth a total of seventeen thousand dollars." Ibid., 40.

109. "Murrow on TV," 88.

110. Bliss, *Now the News*, 236–37. See also comments of Sig Mickelson in *The Edward R. Murrow Heritage: Challenge for the Future*, ed. Betty Houchin Winfield and Lois B. DeFleur, 14 (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1983).

111. Hal Humphrey, "Murrow Prefers the Facts," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 18 Feb. 1955. As president of CBS News in the mid–1960s, Friendly rejected *60 Minutes*, which several producers had proposed as early as 1963. It did not air until 1968. Susan Buzenberg and Bill Buzenberg, eds., *Salant, CBS, and the Battle for the Soul of Broadcast Journalism: The Memoirs of Richard S. Salant* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 61.

112. Anne W. Langman, "Television," *Nation*, 7 July 1956, 25–27; Fred W. Friendly, *Due to Circumstances beyond Our Control . . .* (New York: Random House, 1967), 26–27. In May 1953, Bricker had complained that former Vice President Barkley used his NBC television program, *Meet the Veep*, to attack his amendment. Bricker to Frank White, 8 May 1953, Bricker Papers.

113. Michael Ranville, *To Strike at a King: The Turning Point in the McCarthy Witch-Hunts* (Troy, Mich.: Momentum Books, 1997), 205, 210, 221; George David Smith, *From Monopoly to Competition*, 269.

114. Edward R. Murrow, *In Search of Light: The Broadcasts of Edward R. Murrow, 1938–1961*, ed. Edward Bliss Jr. (New York: Knopf, 1967), 247; Doherty, *Cold War*, 174–77.

115. According to Wershba, in 1979 CBS reported having saved 22 boxes of correspondence relating to the telecast. Each box contained between 750 and 1,000 communications. Eighteen were marked "favorable" to 4 "unfavorable." Joseph Wershba, "Murrow vs. McCarthy: See It Now," *New York Times Magazine*, 4 Mar. 1979, 37. See also "Chi's 85% for Murrow," *Variety*, 17 Mar. 1954, 35.

116. Crosby, "Salute to a Brave Man," *New York Herald Tribune*, 12 Mar. 1954. See also editorial, "McCarthy and the Networks," ibid., 11 Mar. 1954.

117. A. M. Sperber, *Murrow: His Life and Times* (New York: Freundlich, 1986), 441.

118. Ibid.

119. Script, Elmer Davis broadcast, 7 Mar. 1954, Davis Papers, box 25.

120. George Rosen, "Murrow and 'Good Tuesday,'" *Variety*, 17 Mar. 1954, 27.

121. Letter to the editor, Edwin R. Bayley, *Columbia Journalism Review* 38 (Sept./Oct. 1999): 8. See also Brian Thornton, "Published Reaction When Murrow Battled McCarthy," *Journalism History* 29 (Fall 2003): 133–46.

122. Arthur Miller, "The Night Ed Murrow Struck Back," *Esquire*, Dec. 1983, 469.

123. Gallup, *Gallup Poll*, 2:1201, 1229, 1225. See also Thomas C. Reeves, *The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy* (New York: Stein and Day, 1982), 558–59, 562–63, 583–84; Oshinsky, *Conspiracy So Immense*, 393–94.

124. Leonard Traube, "'Reality' Show Comes into Own," *Variety*, 17 Mar. 1954, 25. For a subsequent tribute, see Gore Vidal, "See It Later," *New York Review of Books* 9 (7 Dec. 1967): 26.

125. Interview by author with Joseph Wershba, 15 Apr. 1997.

126. Michael D. Murray, "Television's Desperate Moment: A Conversation with Fred W. Friendly," *Journalism History* 1 (Autumn 1974): 71.

127. Docket 12782, vol. B, exhibit 52, FCC Records, NA; *Minneapolis Star*, 9 Mar. 1954, 33. After much protest, a film of the McCarthy program was aired by WCCO. See "Murrow Yields On Mpls. 'See' Kine," *Variety*, 7 Apr. 1954, 36.

128. Ranville, *To Strike at a King*, 221.

129. Editorial, "The Secret of Liberty," *Variety*, 17 Mar. 1954, 25.

130. William Small, *To Kill a Messenger: Television and the Real World* (New York: Hastings House, 1970), 27.

131. Wershba, "Murrow vs. McCarthy," 33.

132. Lilienthal, *Venturesome Years*, 609–10; Hal Humphrey, "Murrow Prefers the Facts," *Los Angles Mirror-News*, 18 Feb. 1955.

133. Murray, "Television's Desperate Moment," 71.

134. Kendrick, *Prime Time*, 49.

135. "Paley's 'No Timidity' Credo," *Variety*, 26 May 1954, 29.

136. Friendly, *Due to Circumstances*, 75–76; Thomas Whiteside, "One-Ton Pencil," *New Yorker*, 17 Feb. 1962, 84. In a later interview with government investigators, Alcoa representatives only discussed *See It Now*'s low ratings. ONS, "Interview with Alcoa executives," 23 Aug. 1961, 1, Acc. No. 72A1986, box 5, FCC Records, GSA.

137. Review of *See It Now*, *Variety*, 2 Nov. 1955, 35; Whiteside, "One-Ton Pencil," 84; "Wooing the Eggheads," 118; "Murrow's TV Sponsor in Report,"

New York Herald Tribune, 16 Apr. 1954, clipping in *Journal American* Morgue; George David Smith, *From Monopoly to Competition*, 269.

138. Persico, *Edward R. Murrow*, 346; Stanley Frank, "Television's Desperate Numbers Game," *Saturday Evening Post*, 7 Dec. 1957, 149; Jeff Merron, "Murrow on TV: *See It Now*, *Person to Person*, and the Making of a 'Masscult Personality,'" *Journalism Monographs* no. 106 (July 1988): 19. As Merron notes, *Person to Person* might have fared even better in the overall ratings had CBS not scheduled the program on Fridays at 10:30, a relatively unattractive slot.

139. Hal Humphrey, "Down Allen's TV Alley," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 21 Feb. 1955.

140. John Horn, "'Person to Person' Brings the 1950's Back to Life," *New York Times*, 2 July 1978; Pete Martin, "I Call on Edward R. Murrow," *Saturday Evening Post*, 18 Jan. 1958, 77.

141. Persico, *Edward R. Murrow*, 351.

142. Ibid., 350–52. See also John J. O'Connor, "TV: Murrow's 'Person to Person' Returns," *New York Times*, 6 July 1978.

143. Gilbert Seldes, "Mr. Ernst Objects," *Saturday Review*, 8 Mar. 1958, 44–45.

144. Horn, "'Person to Person' Brings the 1950's Back to Life"; Merron, "Murrow on TV," 13, 14, 15, 23; Persico, *Edward R. Murrow*, 345–46, 351–54; Humphrey, "Murrow Prefers the Facts."

145. Persico, *Edward R. Murrow*, 352.

146. Friendly, *Due to Circumstances*, 76; Bliss, *Now the News*, 235.

147. Robert Drew, "See It Then," *Nieman Reports* 9 (Apr. 1955): 34–35. See also Nicholas Lemann, "The Murrow Doctrine," *New Yorker*, 23 and 30 Jan. 2006, 42.

148. Network ad sales growth lagged for the remainder of the decade, falling to 1.8 percent in 1961. See *Broadcasting Yearbook, 1964* (Washington, D.C.: Broadcasting Magazine, 1964), 27.

149. Sevareid to Ernest Leiser, 24 Feb. 1958, Sevareid Papers, box C–2. The other victims were *Let's Take a Trip*, *U.N. in Action*, and *World News Roundup*. See "CBS News Will Drop 3 Sustaining TV Shows," *Broadcasting*, 3 Feb. 1958, 54, 56.

150. On the changing market for network television in 1957–58, see testimony of advertising agents Dan Seymour and Peter Levathes in 9 July 1959, Docket 12782, vol. 2, *Proc.*, 6:767, 858–59, FCC Records, NA.

151. Docket 12285, *Proc.*, 266, Acc. No. 72A1986, box 8, FCC Records, GSA.

152. Memo, J. L. Van Volkenburg to Frank Stanton, 22 Sept. 1954, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 756.

153. ONS, handwritten notes of meeting with CBS executives, 6 Oct. 1958, 42, 43, Acc. No. 72A1986, box 15, FCC Records, GSA; Sig Mickelson, *The De-*

cade That Shaped Television News: CBS in the 1950s (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998), 48–49; Cloud and Olson, *Murrow Boys*, 295–96. A normally admiring Jack Gould described Murrow's precarious position. "Mr. Murrow's Exit," *New York Times*, 22 Feb. 1959. Gould regularly had off-the-record conversations with Murrow's nemesis at the network, Frank Stanton.

154. Seldes, "Indignation Is Not Enough," *Saturday Review*, 16 Aug. 1958, 25.

155. Marquis Childs, "Crisis in Communication," *Nieman Reports* 10 (July 1956), 3. Childs was protesting *See It Now*'s departure from the weekly schedule.

156. Crosby, "The Demise of 'See It Now,'" *New York Herald Tribune*, 11 July 1958; Kennedy to Lou Cowan, 16 July 1958, Theodore C. Sorensen Papers, box 3.

157. Murrow, *In Search of Light*, 355, 364. The original text is in the Murrow Papers, Box 7B25

158. *TV Guide*, 13 Dec. 1958, 22–27, and editorial, *TV Guide*, 27 Dec. 1958, 2; Glenn C. Altschuler and David I. Grossvogel, *Changing Channels: America in TV Guide* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 163. The speech was also reproduced in the opinion magazine *Reporter* 19 (13 Nov. 1958): 32–36.

159. Mannes to Murrow, 23 Oct. 1958, Murrow Papers, box 7B25.

160. Cloud and Olson, *Murrow Boys*, 376.

161. Michael Curtin, *Redeeming the Wasteland: Television Documentary and Cold War Politics* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 121–27; Mickelson, *The Decade That Shaped Television News*, 48, chap. 16; Robert Lewis Shayon, "Mr. Percy's Touch for Television," *Saturday Review*, 8 Oct. 1961, 61–62.

162. Marie Torre, "Out of TV Scandal—Stress on 'Truth' Shows," *New York Herald Tribune*, 3 Dec. 1959, *Herald Tribune* Morgue.

163. Jack Gould, "Trouble in Paradise," *New York Times*, 20 Dec. 1964. See also "Bell and Howell Stocks with 'Close-Up!' *Broadcasting*, 16 Sept. 1961, 34; Edith Efron, "Television: America's Timid Giant," *TV Guide*, 18 May 1963, 4–11; Thomas B. Morgan, "Crisis, Conflict, and Change in TV News," *Look*, 7 Nov. 1961, 62; Karl E. Meyer, "Don't Annoy the Sponsor," *Progressive* (Dec. 1963): 26–29; C. H. Simonds, "The Problem/Solution Industry," *National Review* 19 (16 May 1967), 537; MacNeil, *People Machine*, 76–88.

164. Sarnoff's first offer, Murrow's wife recalled, came immediately after World War II, or before Paley's raids. See Tracie Rozhon, "Pioneer TV Interviewer," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 1 Feb. 1981.

165. Memos, Joseph Pulitzer Jr. to Joseph Pulitzer II, 20 Mar. 1953, and Joseph Pulitzer II to David Sarnoff, 8 June 1953, Pulitzer Papers, box 112.

166. J. G. Jude to Sevareid, 8 Feb. 1954, Sevareid Papers, Box A–4. See also George Rosen, "News Casting Its Own 'Die,'" *Variety*, 21 Nov. 1956, 21, 34.

167. Memo, Hugh M. Beville Jr. to Jack Herbert, 30 Sept. 1953, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 766.

168. Vance Kepley Jr., "The Origins of NBC's Project XX in Compilation Documentaries," *Journalism Quarterly* 61 (Spring 1984): 20–26; memo,

Charles J. Cresswell to S. L. Weaver, 16 Apr. 1951, and "Proposed Television History of the U.S. Navy in World War II," in NBC Papers, WHS, box 277.

169. Childs, "Crisis in Communication," 3. See also "TV 'News in Depth' Kayoed," *Variety*, 27 July 1955, 23. The senior correspondent Joseph C. Harsch hosted the program.

170. Gray, "Television," 265.

171. "Election Night Sponsors Happy over Good Buy," *Advertising Age*, 8 Nov. 1954, 1. On Weaver's belief in integrating information and culture into "all of our shows," see his speech to NBC-TV affiliates, 9 Dec. 1955, in NBC Papers, LC, folder 948.

172. Reuven Frank, *Out of Thin Air*, 86–88; press releases, NBC, 1 June 1955 and 4 June 1956, LC.

173. Judith B. Dolgins, "Aiming High and Making Good," *Television Magazine* (Oct. 1961): 56.

174. Transcript, "The Mike Wallace Interview," [aired 8 June 1958] 4, copy in Fund for the Republic Papers, box 70.

175. Frank, *Out of Thin Air*, 49, 141; Weaver, transcript of UCLA lecture, 22 Apr. 1987, 7, Weaver Papers, box 28; transcript of Weaver interview by Pete Martin [1964], 11, Martin Papers, box 40.

176. Frank, *Out of Thin Air*, 90–95; "The World Is His Beat," *TV Guide*, 23 Aug. 1958, 19; press release, NBC, 10 July 1956, LC.

177. Margaret McManus, *Newark Evening News*, 24 July 1960, clipping in Chet Huntley NYPL files; William L. Rivers, *The Opinionmakers* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), 106–8; press release, NBC, 3 July 1956, LC; "First Team," *Newsweek*, 13 Mar. 1961, 56. For a critical review, see Jack O'Brian, "Cronkite Best of Network Anchor Men at Chicago," *New York Journal American*, 19 Aug. 1956, *Journal American* Morgue. The veteran political reporter Bill Henry of the *Los Angeles Times* was the third coanchor of NBC's convention coverage.

178. Advertest Research, Inc., "Study of TV News and Educational Programs," *Television Audience of Today* 3 (Sept. 1951): 10, copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 193; Barbara Matusow, *The Evening Stars: The Making of the Network News Anchor* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983), 58–61, 79.

179. Frank, *Out of Thin Air*, 110–21; Matusow, *Evening Stars*, 58–61, 64–66; William Whitworth, "An Accident of Casting," *New Yorker*, 3 Aug. 1968, 52–53; Bill Slocum, "The Lighthearted Battler of TV," *Saturday Evening Post*, 14 July 1956, 76; NBC News availability sheet, 12 Apr. 1957, Seymour Papers, box 8; J. Walter Thompson, Chicago Office, "Network TV Availability," 14 Nov. 1956, Radio and Television Department, box 4, Thompson Papers.

180. Quoted in Edward Jay Epstein, *News from Nowhere; Television and the News* (New York: Random House, 1973), 86–87. See also Mayer, *Madison Avenue*, 203 and review of *NBC News*, *Variety*, 31 Oct. 1956, 27.

181. Robert Sarnoff to Edward Lambert, 1 Mar. 1957, KOMU Papers, folder 157; Reuven Frank to Mrs. R. D. Redfeim, 1 Feb. 1957, copy in Huntley Papers, box 1.

182. Memo, Hugh M. Beville Jr. to Robert E. Kintner, 30 Dec. 1957, copy in Radio and Television Department, Thompson Papers, box 6.

183. Edward Jay Epstein, *News from Nowhere*, 86; Herbert B. Cahan, form letter, [ca. Oct. 1958], copy in Huntley Papers, box 2; Dorothea Lantos to Huntley, 30 June 1958; M. C. Wissman to Mrs. Robert Wray, 5 Nov. 1957; Reuven Frank to Earl E. Odal, 16 Feb. 1958, copies in ibid., box 1.

184. *Television Digest*, 21 Mar. 1960, 12; Matusow, *Evening Stars*, 78–79.

185. The numbers were comparable for election night, 1960, and Kennedy's inauguration the following January. "First Team," 54n; NBC Research Highlights, [14 Mar. 1960], in NBC Papers, WHS, box 150; "How NBC News Built Its Muscle," *Broadcasting*, 1 Aug. 1960, 68–69.

186. Marie Torre, "NBC Heroes: Huntley, Brinkley, the RCA 501," *New York Herald Tribune*, 10 Nov. 1960.

187. Persico, *Edward R. Murrow*, 353.

188. "First Team," 54.

189. Review of *NBC News*, *Variety*, 31 Oct. 1956, 27.

190. Robert Pollack to Huntley and Brinkley, 16 July 1958, Huntley Papers, box 1.

191. Editorial, "David Brinkley," *New York Times*, 13 June 2003.

192. Paul Gardner, "Anniversary Time for a Top Team," *New York Times*, 15 Aug. 1965; Whitworth, "Accident of Casting," 34, 39, 44, 51; Bart Barnes, "Journalist Helped Usher in Heyday of Network News," *Washington Post*, 13 June 2003.

193. NBC commissioned the survey; 85.1 percent of all members of Congress participated, a very high response rate. Walter Gerson and Associates, "Television Opinion and Preference Survey among Members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives," July 1961, copy in NBC Papers, LC, folder 38.

194. Quoted in Rivers, *Opinionmakers*, 108. On the print media's disdain for TV news in the 1950s, see Nancy Bernhard, *US Television News and Cold War Propaganda, 1947–1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 50.

195. See, for example, John P. Robinson, "The Audience for National TV News Programs," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 35 (Autumn 1971): 403–5; Robert L. Stevenson and Kathryn P. White, "The Cumulative Audience of Network Television News," *Journalism Quarterly* 57 (Autumn 1980): 477–81.

196. Whitworth, "Accident of Casting," 52.

197. Expanded to thirty minutes in September 1963, *The Huntley Brinkley Report* earned about $20 million for NBC in 1964. Richard K. Doan, "NBC's Kintner: The Hot No-Hitter," *New York Herald Tribune*, *New York Magazine*, 16 May 1965, 13.

198. Allan Keller, "Nose for News and Head for Business," *New York World Telegram and Sun*, 21 Aug. 1964, *Herald Tribune* Morgue.

199. Shirer to Morris Ernst, 9 Apr. 1959, Ernst Papers, box 542; Frank, *Out of Thin Air*, 130, 132–34, 147–48; Robert E. Kintner, "Broadcasting and the News," *Harper's*, Apr. 1965, 52.

200. Frank, *Out of Thin Air*, 134, 137; "NBC's Kintner: First Comes News," *Printers' Ink* (3 Aug. 1962): 56; Kintner, "Broadcasting and the News," 52; Bob Stahl, "Five Who Are Taking a Giant Step at NBC," *TV Guide*, 10 Oct. 1959, 10.

201. Doan, "NBC's Kintner," 43.

202. Sevareid to Charles Collingwood, 24 Feb. 1958, Sevareid Papers, box C-2.

203. Frank, *Out of Thin Air*, 120–21, 137; Kintner, "Broadcasting and the News," 54.

204. Milton Viorst, "The Rise and Fall of Robert Kintner," *Washingtonian* 2 (June 1967): 37, 50.

205. ONS, notes of interview with NBC executives, 28–29 Oct. 1958, 6, Acc. No. 72A1986, box 11, FCC Records, GSA.

206. Whitworth, "Accident of Casting," 34; David Brinkley, *11 Presidents, 4 Wars, 22 Political Conventions . . .* (New York: Knopf, 1995), 219.

Chapter 10. Shooting the Wounded

Epigraphs: Oral argument, 5 Jan. 1952, Docket 10031, vol. 41, 237, FCC Records, NA. Anne W. Langman, "Television," *Nation*, 9 June 1956, 499. Jeff Kisseloff, *The Box: An Oral History of Television, 1920–1961* (New York: Viking, 1995), 231.

1. Charles Denton, "Berle Comes Bowling Back to Television," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 15 Sept. 1960, Hearst Collection; Milton Berle, *Milton Berle* (New York: Dell, 1975), 351.

2. FCC, *Report on Chain Broadcasting* (1941), reprinted in House TV Inquiry hearings, 3582–83, 3625.

3. Ibid., 3606; Sally Bedell Smith, *In All His Glory: The Life and Times of William S. Paley* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 198.

4. Robert Kintner to J. P. Williams, 21 Sept. 1950, Hinckley Papers, box 87; "History of the ABC Network," 2–3, Docket 10031, vol. 34, ABC exhibit 3, FCC Records, NA; Erik Barnouw, *A Tower in Babel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 272; Stefan Kanfer, *Groucho: The Life and Times of Julius Henry Marx* (New York: Knopf, 2000), 310.

5. Memo, E. E. Anderson to James A. McKenna, 11 June 1953, Hinckley Papers, box 87; Docket 10031, vol. 10, *Proc.*, 38:5666, FCC Records, NA.

6. Ev Erlick commented on Noble's niggardly ways in Leonard H. Goldenson, *Beating the Odds* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1991), 101, while Frank Marx, in ibid., 98, said Noble fired him for applying for the TV licenses,

only to bring him back after several days. See also "His Golden Touch Pans Out Again," *Business Week*, 14 Mar. 1953, 82, 86, 88; testimony of Robert E. Kintner in Docket 10031, vol. 10, *Proc.*, 35:5412, 5443,and 41:6117, and "History of the ABC Network," 4–6, both in FCC Records, NA; and Robert E. Kintner, "Summary of Department Heads Meeting, 16 Nov. 1948," Hinckley Papers, box 84; C. N. Priaulx to all department heads, 8 Apr. 1948, ibid., box 87; "Noble's $1,000,000 Life-Saver," *Variety*, 2 Nov. 1949, 29, 40.

7. Docket 10031, vol. 11, *Proc.*, 41:6133–34, FCC Records, NA.

8. Christopher H. Sterling and John M. Kittross, *Stay Tuned: A Concise History of American Broadcasting*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1990), 636.

9. FCC, *Reports*, 17 (1953), 264, 320. Du Mont was even further behind, at 6.1 percent in 1951 and 5.6 percent in 1952. *1957 International Television Almanac* (New York: Quigley Publications, [1956]), p. XII.

10. Docket 10031, vol. 10, *Proc.*, 35:5445, FCC Records, NA.

11. Sidney Lohman, "Garnered from the Studios," *New York Times*, 5 Dec. 1948; "20th Century-Fox Seeks to Buy the American Broadcasting Co.," ibid., 24 Nov. 1948, and "20th Century-Fox Fails in Radio Chain Deal," ibid., 2 Dec. 1948. In his FCC testimony, Kintner mentions two film studios, a record company, and an electronics concern. See Docket 10031, vol. 10, *Proc.*, 35:5444, FCC Records, NA; Thomas L. Stix to Joseph C. Harsch, 11 Jan. 1949, Harsch Papers, box 38.

12. "His Golden Touch Pans Out Again," *Business Week*, 14 Mar. 1953, 84; [CBS], "Next Steps in Acquisitions of O/O TV Units," 26 Mar. 1951, copy in House TV Inquiry hearings, box 756; Kintner testimony, Docket 10031, vol. 10, *Proc.*, 35:5444–45, and vol. 11, *Proc.*, 41:6157, FCC Records, NA; minutes of ABC Board of Directors meeting, 30 Apr. 1951, Hinckley Papers, box 84; Jack Gould, "Columbia Network Reportedly Seeking A.B.C. at $28,000,000," *New York Times*, 4 May 1951.

13. "25 Years Wiser about Show Business," *Broadcasting*, 14 July 1958, 82.

14. Thomas B. Morgan, "Leonard H. Goldenson of ABC," *TV Guide*, 8 Dec. 1962, 8.

15. "25 Years Wiser," 82; Docket 10031, vol. 10, *Proc.*, 35:5443, and vol. 12, *Proc.*, 43:6608–9, FCC Records, NA; Goldenson, *Beating the Odds*, 30–68, 95–96.

16. "TV-Movie Liaison Pointed Up in Joint Announcement," *Broadcasting*, 22 June 1953, 9; Fred A. Silverman, "An Analysis of ABC Television Network Programming from February 1953 to October 1959" (master's thesis, Ohio State University, 1959), 63–64; Docket 10031, vol. 9, *Proc.*, 34:5084–86, 5089–90, FCC Records, NA.

17. Goldenson, *Beating the Odds*, 99–107; Richard S. Tedlow and Henry Feingold, "Interview with Leonard Goldenson," *American Jewish History* 72

(Sept. 1982): 118; Goldenson to UPT stockholders, 25 June 1951, Docket 10031, vol. 33, FCC Records, NA.

18. Oral argument, 5 Jan. 1952, Docket 10031, vol. 41, 237, FCC Records, NA; FCC, *Reports*, 17 (1953), 264, 379–80; James P. McGranery to Paul A. Walker, 7 Jan. 1953, McGranery Papers, box 65; interview by author with Frederick W. Ford, 19 June 1978.

19. Docket 10031, vol. 41, oral argument, 253, FCC Records, NA.

20. John Crosby, "Network in Trouble," *New York Herald Tribune*, 26 Mar. 1952.

21. FCC, *Reports*, 17 (1953), 264, 350; Gordon Allison, "ABC and Paramount Theatres Get F.C.C. Approval of Merger," *New York Herald Tribune*, 10 Feb. 1953, 1, 19.

22. Editorial, "Bureaucratic Bungle," *Business Week*, 21 Feb. 1953, 200; Martin Mayer, "ABC: Portrait of a Network," *Show* 1 (Oct. 1961): 60.

23. Crosby, "Network in Trouble."

24. John Crosby, "Deserted Network," *New York Herald Tribune*, 13 Oct. 1952.

25. Bob Chandler, "ABC's Bid as 'Big 3' TV Entry Set for Affiliate Nod on Friday," *Variety*, 7 Oct. 1953, 28; minutes of AB-UP Board of Directors meeting, 8 Apr. 1953, Hinckley Papers, box 84.

26. Memo, E. E. Anderson to Edward J. Noble, 25 Mar. 1954, copy in Hinckley Papers, box 87; Richard Schickel, *The Disney Version* (New York: Avon Books, 1968), 266–67; Steven Watts, *The Magic Kingdom: Walt Disney and the American Way of Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 363–65; AB-UP, *Annual Report, 1954*, 17, 21; "Disney's 7-Year ABC-TV Deal," *Variety*, 31 Mar. 1954, 41; Walter Ames, "Disney Signs Agreement for TV," *Los Angeles Times*, 2 Apr. 1954; press release, NBC, 22 Nov. 1950, in NBC Papers, WHS, box 593. See also John M. Findlay, *Magic Lands: Western Cityscapes and American Culture after 1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 52–63, 66, 86–87.

27. Schickel, *Disney Version*, 11. See also Watts, *Magic Kingdom*, 367.

28. Crosby, "Repeat Performance," *New York Herald Tribune*, 13 Jan. 1956.

29. Memo, [Dan Seymour?], 7 Nov. 1956, Radio and Television Department, Thompson Papers, box 1; Slocum Chapin to Seymour, 18 July 1956, Seymour Papers, box 25; "Here's Your First View of Disneyland," *Look* 18 (2 Nov. 1954), 84; Hedda Hopper, "Disney Planning Four Kinds of Films on TV," *Los Angeles Times*, 10 Apr. 1954; AB-UP, *Annual Report, 1955*, 15, 16; Dick Williams, "Movie Studios and TV Are Getting Closer," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 26 Apr. 1955. See also Watts, *Magic Kingdom*, 335–45; Kirse Granat May, *Golden State, Golden Youth: The California Image in Popular Culture, 1955–1966* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), chaps. 3–4; Gregg Mitman, *Reel Nature: America's Romance with Wildlife on Film* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 125–31.

30. Charles R. Abry to Daniel Seymour, 17 Apr. 1956, Radio and Television Department, Thompson Papers, box 3; Goldenson, *Beating the Odds*, 59; telegram, Kintner to Jack L. Warner, 23 Sept. 1955, Warner Brothers Papers; Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV: The Studio System in the Fifties* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 189–213, 238; Kisseloff, *The Box*, 291, 546.

31. Jack Gould, "Two Networks on the Spot," *New York Times*, 8 Apr. 1956; memos, Dan Seymour to Henry C. Flower Jr. et al., 13 Nov. 1956, Seymour Papers, box 1; Storrs Haynes to John Devine, 12 Sept. 1956, Radio and Television Department, Thompson Papers, box 1; Sterling and Kittross, *Stay Tuned*, 636; *1958 International Television Almanac* (New York: Quigley Publications, 1957), 12A.

32. George C. McConnaughey to Emanuel Celler, 22 June 1956, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 757; Goldenson, *Beating the Odds*, 137.

33. "ABC-TV Reaching for the Stars," *Variety*, 25 Mar. 1953, 51. See also comments of ABC vice president Slocum Chapin in Silverman, "Analysis of ABC," 60.

34. Goldenson, *Beating the Odds*, 134.

35. George C. McConnaughey to Emanuel Celler, 22 June 1956, House TV Inquiry hearings, box 757.

36. ABC, "Petition to Revise Television Allocations Standards and the Table of Assignments," 7 Oct. 1955, 1, Docket 11532, vol. 4, FCC Records, GSA. After extensive hearings, the House Judiciary Committee supported ABC's conclusion. See U.S. House, Judiciary Committee, *Report of the Antitrust Subcommittee*, 85th Congress, 1st sess., 1957, 18, 20.

37. Dan Melnick's recollection in Goldenson, *Beating the Odds*, 151; "The ABC of ABC," *Forbes*, 15 June 1959, 17; John P. Ferre, "'Foremost in Service, Best in Entertainment': WHAS-TV, Louisville," in *Television in America: Local Station History from across the Nation* ed. Michael Murray and Donald Godfrey, 94–95 (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1997).

38. Leo Guild, "The Numbers Game," *New York Herald Tribune TV and Radio Magazine*, 1–7 June 1958, 7; Silverman, "Analysis of ABC," 93–94. The program remained popular in succeeding years, with Nielsen finishes of fifth (1958–59), fourth (1959–60), twelfth (1960–61), seventh (1961–62), seventh (1962–63), and ninth (1963–64).

39. U.S. Congress, House Judiciary Committee, *TV Inquiry*, 84th Congress, 2nd sess., 1956, 4756–57.

40. "FCC Denies Deintermixture," *Broadcasting*, 10 Oct. 1955, 29; "On the Air," *Denver Post*, 1 Apr. 1955, 22.

41. Senate *TV Inquiry* hearings, pt. 4, 2469.

42. U.S. Congress, House, Commerce Committee, *All Channel Television Receivers*, hearings, 87th Congress, 2nd sess., 1962, 318; ABC, response to network questionnaire, n.d. [1956], 7–10, Senate TV Inquiry, box 688.

43. Kathryn B. Campbell, "Trying Television: WKOW-TV in the 1950s," *American Journalism* 18 (Spring 2001): 89–90, 92; WKOW-TV, response to television questionnaire, n.d. [1956], 5, Senate TV Inquiry, box 716.

44. "UHF No Go against Multiple V's-NBC," *Broadcasting*, 16 June 1958, 32–33.

45. "The ABC of ABC," *Forbes*, 15 June 1959, 17; Silverman, "Analysis of ABC," 106, 152; Mayer, "ABC," 60; memo for files, James F. Tierney, 11 Feb. 1957, ONS, Invoice 72A1986, box 22, FCC Records, GSA; E. P. Genock to W. B. Potter, 27 Mar. 1956, copy in Seymour Papers, box 25. As noted in chapter 7, ABC, in the case of *Ozzie and Harriet*, assumed a share of the syndication rights, allowing it to recover its first-run losses. Dan Seymour to W. B. Potter, 15 Nov. 1956, Seymour Papers, box 28.

46. Silverman, "Analysis of ABC," 106–8, 137; "What's Left for the Smaller Networks?" *Business Week*, 27 Nov. 1954, 118; Robert J. Donovan and Ray Scherer, *Unsilent Revolution: Television News and American Life, 1948–1991* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 29.

47. Memo, George Bristol to All [CBS] TV Network Salesmen, 14 Feb. 1957, copy in NBC Papers, WHS, box 140.

48. Call Report, 29 Mar. 1956, Seymour Papers, box 26.

49. Silverman, "Analysis of ABC," 93, 129, 135; ONS, [unabridged] notes of interview with CBS representatives, 6–9 Oct. 1958, 66, Acc. No. 72A1986, box 6, FCC Records, GSA; interview by author with Michael Dann, 14 June 1979.

50. *Broadcasting Yearbook, 1963* (Washington, D.C.: Broadcasting Magazine, 1963), 20.

51. "25 Years Wiser about Show Business," 84; Silverman, "Analysis of ABC," 99–100, 147–48.

52. Docket 10031, vol. 12, *Proc.*, 44:6866, FCC Records, NA.

53. For the second week of November, the percentage of live programs rose from 77 percent in 1952 to 80.6 percent in 1953. It increased to 83 percent in 1954. See ABC, response to network questionnaire, n.d. [1956], 23, Senate TV Inquiry, box 688.

54. Docket 10031, vol. 34, *Proc.*, 2:153, FCC Records, NA.

55. Senate *TV Inquiry* hearings, pt. 4, 2466, 2507–9. See also ibid., pt. 2, 764; ABC, "Petition to Revise Television Allocations Standards and the Table of Assignments," ibid., vol. 4; House *Monopoly Problems*, pt. 2: *Television*, 84th Congress, 2nd sess., 1956, 4698, 4777ff; Senate *Status of UHF*, 939, 950; Leonard H. Goldenson to Warren G. Magnuson, 16 Nov. 1956, Senate TV Inquiry, box 701.

56. [Daily Telegraph Printing Co.], "Comments in Opposition to 'Petition . . . ,'" n.d., [ca. Nov. 1956], Docket 11532, vol. 14, FCC Records, GSA; Dick Markarian to Kenneth Cox, 14 June 1956, Senate TV Inquiry, box 687.

57. Goldenson, *Beating the Odds*, 137, 140–142; Tedlow and Feingold, "Interview with Leonard Goldenson," 120–21; "Goldenson Temporarily ABC Prez," *Variety*, 17 Oct. 1956, 1, 78; Richard A. R. Pinkham, "The Glamour Medium—And Some Men Who Made It," *Printers' Ink*, 14 June 1963, 242; Spencer Klaw, "ABC-Paramount Moves In," *Fortune*, Apr. 1957, 133, 244; Kisseloff, *The Box*, 542; notes of interview with Kintner, n.d., Mayer Papers, box 68; Kintner to Ralph Nelson, 19 May 1953 and 4 Dec. 1953, Ralph Nelson Papers, box 43; handwritten notes, apparently by Hinckley, Oct. 16 [1956], and memo, "What has happened since October 10?" in Hinckley Papers, box 84; Thomas B. Morgan, "Goldenson," 7; Val Adams, "Kintner to Resign as President of A.B.C.," *New York Times*, 16 Oct. 1956, and Adams, "Goldenson Gets Post as A.B.C. Head," ibid., 17 Oct. 1956. Goldenson's unhappiness was echoed in AB-UP *Annual Report, 1956*, 14.

58. "The Ultimate Responsibility," *Time*, 16 Nov. 1959, 80.

59. Ibid.

60. Goldenson, *Beating the Odds*, 166–67; Kintner interview notes, Mayer Papers.

61. Goldenson, *Beating the Odds*, 11–12.

62. Income data from 1953, 1956, and 1957 AB-UP annual reports. See also "The ABC of ABC," *Forbes*, 15 June 1959, 17.

63. "The ABC of ABC," *Forbes*, 15 June 1959, 16.

64. Albert R. Kroeger, "Miracle Worker of West 66th Street," *Television Magazine* (Feb. 1961): 68.

65. Robert Cunniff, "Mediocrity's Mahatma," *Show Business Illustrated* 1 (19 Sept. 1961): 48.

66. Silverman, "Analysis of ABC," 99; *Broadcasting*, 2 June 1958, 5; "Strategy for a Program Battle," ibid., 17 Aug. 1959, 28.

67. Watts, *Magic Kingdom*, 367; "Pat on the Back for Disney," *Advertising Age*, 27 Dec. 1954, 37; Silverman, "Analysis of ABC," 138, 230–31; Hal Humphrey, "Godfrey and 'Oscar' Goof," *Los Angeles Mirror*, 15 Feb. 1955; Jack Gould, "A Gloomy Godfrey," 13 Feb. 1955.

68. Goldenson, *Beating the Odds*, 139.

69. Silverman, "Analysis of ABC," 156, 182; Stephen Davis, *Say Kids! What Time Is It? Notes from the Peanut Gallery* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1987), 181–82.

70. Bill Slocum, "Trouble in TV," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 24 Mar. 1957, Hearst Collection.

71. Alan Havig, *Fred Allen's Radio Comedy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 56–57; Silverman, "Analysis of ABC," 230–31.

72. Silverman, "Analysis of ABC," 85–86.

73. Gould, "Gloomy Godfrey."

74. Memos, Art Silver to Warner, 1 Oct. 1955; Kintner to Warner 18 Oct. 1955; Warner Brothers Papers. See also memo, Richard Diggs to Robert Lewine, 6 Oct. 1955, ibid.

75. On the decline of Berle's program, see Hal Humphrey, "Allen a Hit, Berle a Flop," *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, 7 Apr. 1955.

76. "ABC's New TV Center Start Due," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 1 Aug. 1957, Hearst Collection; "Want to Earn $3 Million A Year?" *New York Daily News*, 26 Apr. 1959, Welk file, NYPL; "Treyz Getting Lots of Coin to Pour into ABC-TV Weak Spots," *Variety*, 7 Nov. 1956, 25; Klaw, "ABC-Paramount," 133–34; AB-UP *Annual Report*, *1956*, 8; minutes of AB-UP Board of Directors meeting, 12 Dec. 1956, 4–6, Hinckley Papers, box 84.

77. Tom Stempel, *Storytellers to the Nation: A History of American Television Writing* (New York: Continuum, 1992), 64–67. One of my earliest television memories was regularly and enthusiastically watching *Maverick* with my older brother and father in the late 1950s.

78. Jack O'Brien, "Warner Bros. Do It Again!" *New York Journal American*, 11 Oct. 1958, Efrem Zimbalist Jr. file, NYPL; Russell Sanjek, *American Popular Music and Its Business: The First Four Hundred Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 3:349; Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Random House, 1994), 107; Stempel, *Storytellers*, 67–69.

79. AB-UP *Annual Report*, *1957*, 3.

80. Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV*, 241.

81. Goldenson testimony, Docket 12285, *Proc.*, 1:34, FCC Records, GSA; Silverman, "Analysis of ABC," 231–32.

82. ABC, *Twix* 1 (May 1957), copy in KOMU Papers, box 7; "ABC-TV, Once Off-Limits for P&G, May Benefit to Tune of $20,000,000," *Variety*, 25 Mar. 1959, 29.

83. Oliver Treyz, "The Winnah!—The Public," *1958 International Television Almanac*, 19A.

84. "The ABC of ABC," *Forbes*, 15 June 1959, 15; CBS, *Annual Report*, *1960*, n.p.

85. AB-UP, *Annual Report*, *1959*, 4.

86. *1957 International Television Almanac*, and *1963 International Television Almanac* (New York: Quigley Publications, 1962).

87. John Bartlow Martin, "Battle of the Big Three," *Saturday Evening Post*, 28 Oct. 1961, 58, 60. See also memo, L. P. B. Emerson to John S. Cross, 18 Jan. 1962, copy in Henry Papers, box 53.

88. Bernard B. Smith, "A New Weapon to Get Better TV," *Harper's*, July 1962, 30.

89. Docket 12782, vol. 14, *Proc.*, 36:5331, FCC Records, NA. See also testimony of David Davidson in ibid., vol. 14, *Proc.*, 36:5374–75, ibid.

90. Ibid., *Proc.*, 37:5526–27, 5627.

91. *Television Digest*, 9 Nov. 1959, 6.

92. Frank Sturcken, *Live Television: The Golden Age of 1946–1958 in New York* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1990), 111.

93. Docket 12782, vol. 19, *Proc.*, 54:8363, FCC Records, NA.

94. Welk drew a 23.1 Nielsen from 10:00 to 10:30 p.m. in December 1956 compared to *Studio One*'s 10.2 and *Montgomery*'s 13.1. The figures were based on markets where all three networks had comparable affiliates. "ABC's 10 Toppers," *Broadcasting*, 28 Jan. 1957, 28.

95. Goldenson, *Beating the Odds*, 148–49; Pinkham, 244.

96. "ABC-TV's Oliver Treyz: Daring Young Man with a Mission," *Printers' Ink*, 20 June 1958, 56; press release, ABC, 8 May 1961, copy in Mayer Papers, box 68. Nielsen data tended to confirm ABC's assertion. See *Sponsor*, 9 Jan. 1960, 21, and 30 Jan. 1960, 17.

97. "The ABC of ABC," 17.

98. *Wall Street Journal*, 12 May 1961, 12.

99. Richard S. Tedlow, *New and Improved: The Story of Mass Marketing in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 369–72. See also Michael E. Porter, *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors* (New York: Free Press, 1980), 37–41; Porter, *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance* (New York: Free Press, 1985), 120–21, 156–63, 186–91, 473–77, 514–36, chap. 4; Robert Fitzgerald, "Rowntree and Market Strategy, 1897–1939," *Business and Economic History* 2nd ser., 18 (1989): 45–58.

100. Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV*, 237–40.

101. ONS, notes of interview with Gail Smith, director of advertising, General Motors, 20 Sept. 1961, Acc. No. 72A1986, box 4, FCC Records, GSA; "How Agencies Rate the Networks," *Broadcasting*, 25 July 1960, 28.

102. Emphasis in original. ONS, Notes of interview with representatives of Liggett and Myers, 13 Sept. 1961, Acc. No. 72A1986, box 4, FCC Records, GSA.

103. Val Adams, "TV-Radio News-Boss," *New York Times*, 21 Apr. 1963; Victoria E. Johnson, "Citizen Welk: Bubbles, Blue Hair, and Middle America," in *The Revolution Wasn't Televised: Sixties Television and Social Conflict*, ed. Lynn Spigel and Michael Curtin, 265–85 (New York: Routledge, 1997); "The Big Corn Crop," *Time*, 21 May 1956, 89; Bill Davidson, "Lawrence Welk: Nobody Likes Him Except the Public," *Look*, 25 June 1957, 116–18; Robert de Roos, "The Music Maker with the Iron Hand," *TV Guide*, 17 June 1961, 18–20; "Welk Belts 'Em," *Variety*, 30 Nov. 1955, 29; review of *Lawrence Welk's Top Tunes*, *Variety*, 10 Oct. 1956, clipping in Welk file, NYPL; Bill Slocum, "Only the Public Digs This Square," *New York Daily Mirror*, 3 Aug. 1958, clipping in ibid.; Goldenson, *Beating the Odds*, 130–31; William K. Schwienher, *Lawrence Welk: An American Institution* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1980), 27, 73, 160; Coyne Steven Sanders and Ginny Weissman, *Champagne Music: The Lawrence Welk Show* (New York: St. Martin's, 1985), 10, 24; Dick Hobson, "Who Watches What?" *TV Guide*, 27 July 1968, 5–8; *Variety*, 15 June 1960, 38; Bernard Weinraub, "Hollywood Ending for Music Palace," *New York Times*, 21 Aug. 2003.

104. Annual Report, 15 Mar. 1958, 13–14, Radio and Television Department, Thompson Papers, box 1; "This Is the Real McCoy," *TV Guide*, 2 Aug. 1958, 22; Goldenson, *Beating the Odds*, 143.

105. *Variety*, 2 Dec. 1959, 42, and 15 June 1960, 38; Silverman, "Analysis of ABC," 227.

106. Silverman, "Analysis of ABC," 346; Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV*, 280.

107. Kisseloff, *The Box*, 295.

108. Docket 12782, vol. 9, *Proc.*, 9:3718, FCC Records, NA.

109. "Strategy for a Program Battle," *Broadcasting*, 17 Aug. 1959, 34; Joseph R. Dominick and Millard C. Pearce, "Trends in Network Prime-Time Programming," *Journal of Communication* 26 (Winter 1976): 75; "Which-away Westerns," *Television Age* 7 (8 Feb. 1960): 29.

110. Silverman, "Analysis of ABC," 140.

111. Ibid., 269; Kintner interview notes, Mayer Papers. *Wagon Train* moved to ABC starting with the 1962–63 season, but its high popularity could not be sustained. It fell out of the Nielsen top 25 after one year.

112. Bradley S. Greenberg, "The Content and Context of Violence in the Mass Media," in *Mass Media and Violence: A Report to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence*, ed. David J. Lange et al., 448 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1969).

113. Howard G. Spaulding to Newton N. Minow, 21 May 1961, Acc. No. 63A83, box 240, FCC Records, GSA.

114. "The Day Ness Was Bumped Off," *Television Digest* 17 (24 July 1961), 9; Kern review, *Chicago American*, 16 Oct. 1959, 26; *Variety*, 29 Mar. 1961, 31. On the possible effects of TV violence, see George Comstock et al., *Television and Human Behavior* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 228. My mother did not wait for the WEWS station manager's edict. In a rare act of video censorship, she had already forbidden me to watch the program. I was about nine years old.

115. "Beech-Nut Hitches Its Sales to TV Star," *Printers' Ink*, 30 Jan. 1959, 72, 76; John A. Jackson, *American Bandstand: Dick Clark and the Making of a Rock 'n' Roll Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 30–40, 48–49, 52–53; "TV Bandstand: Teen-agers' favorite," *Look*, 13 May 1959, 69.

116. "Sun Shines Bright on Daytime TV," *Broadcasting*, 19 Apr. 1965, 31; Silverman, "Analysis of ABC," 314–18.

117. Jackson, *American Bandstand*, 40, 55, 57, 66, 69, 75–76, 104.

118. "25 Years Wiser about Show Business," 86. *Gunsmoke* premiered 10 Sept. 1955, or four days after *Wyatt Earp* and before *Warner Brothers Presents.*

119. Notes of interview with Mike Dann, ca. early 1960s(?), Mayer Papers, box 68.

120. Docket 12782, vol. 21, *Proc.*, 61:9426, FCC Records, NA.

121. Bob Stahl, "ABC—Young, Ambitious, Brash," *TV Guide*, 1 Aug. 1959, 6.

122. Transcript, "WCBS Looks at Television," 21 May 1965, 7, WCBS Papers.

123. Gerald Gale to Newton N. Minow, 30 June 1961, Acc. No. 63A83, box 243, FCC Records, GSA.

124. Mayer, "ABC," 61; Bill Slocum, "The Lighthearted Battler of TV," *Saturday Evening Post*, 14 July 1956, 76. In contrast, the CBS and NBC news programs in 1969 were carried in all major markets. See Edward Jay Epstein, *News from Nowhere: Television and the News* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 97.

125. *Congressional Record* 105 (25 Apr. 1959): 6747; Jack Gould, "A Victim of Ratings," *New York Times*, 19 Apr. 1959; editorial, "Thwarted by Broadcasters," *Musical America* 79 (June 1959): 4; Conrad L. Osborne, "Nostalgic Echoes from 'The Voice of Firestone,'" *New York Times*, 14 July 1991; Kroeger, "Miracle Worker," 62; "No Time for Quality," *Newsweek*, 27 Apr. 1959, 104; "The ABC of ABC," *Forbes*, 15 June 1959, 15; John Ellis Fick to Paul H. Douglas, 15 May 1959, Douglas Papers, box 85; Senate *Status of UHF*, 941.

126. Mary Jane Morris to ABC, 30 Apr. 1959; Mortimer Weinbach to Morris, 20 May 1959, Acc. No. 72A1986, box 22, FCC Records, GSA; U.S. House, Government Operations Committee, *Reorganization Plans Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 of 1961*, hearings, 87th Congress, 1st sess., 1961, 107.

127. Robert Horton, "The Economic Squeeze on Mass TV," *Reporter* 22 (28 Apr. 1960): 20.

128. Thomas B. Morgan, "Crisis, Conflict, and Change in TV News," *Look*, 7 Nov. 1961, 52; Goldenson, *Beating the Odds*, 276.

129. "Bell and Howell's Big Pub Affairs Buy on ABC-TV," *Variety*, 8 June 1960, 19; Michael Curtin, *Redeeming the Wasteland: Television Documentary and Cold War Politics* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 135.

130. Jim Frankel, "Network's Bow to Edict on Mr. K," *Cleveland Press*, 29 Sept. 1960. See also "ABC-TV's 'Sometimes Terrifying' Pubaffairs Entries for B&H May Tackle Anti-Semitism, Birth Control," *Variety*, 15 June 1960, 23.

131. Peterson to Shayon, 26 July 1960, Edgar Peterson to Shayon, 15 July 1960, Shayon Papers, box 10.

132. *Television Magazine* (July 1961): 60.

133. "What's His Line?" *Time*, 28 Nov. 1960, 62, 64; "Time Documentaries," *Broadcasting*, 21 Nov. 1960, 91; Morgan, "Crisis, Conflict, and Change," 52, 54; Jack Gould, "Overhaul at A.B.C.," *New York Times*, 27 Nov. 1960; Daly to Goldenson, 15 Nov. 1960, Daly Papers, box 31.

134. NBC had UHF affiliates in two markets; both NBC and ABC had UHF stations contending with CBS's VHFs in two communities. See "ABC Television Network, Progress and Problems; A Status Report from ABC Television," (Apr. 1961), copy in Minow Papers, box 2; Donald Fred Ungurait, "An Historical Analysis of Regularly Scheduled, Prime Time, Network Television

Programming Costs (1948–1949 to 1967–1968)" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1968), 215–19; George Rosen, "The TV Battle for Facilities," *Variety*, 29 Mar. 1961, 17, 40.

135. Mayer, "ABC," 61; Goldenson, *Beating the Odds*, 252; Treyz testimony in Docket 12782, vol. 21, *Proc.*, 9357–58, 9384, FCC Records, NA; ABC, "Petition for Reconsideration," 1 July 1963, 20–21, Docket 14231, vol. 3, FCC Records, NA.

136. Henry P. Bankhead to Newton N. Minow, 17 May 1961, Acc. No. 63A83, box 240, FCC Records, GSA; Mayer, "ABC," 59.

137. Stahl, "ABC—Young, Ambitious," 6.

138. ABC Television Network, "Progress and Problems; A Status Report from ABC Television," Apr. 1961, copy in Minow Papers, box 2; Treyz to Page Belcher, 14 Sept. 1961, Belcher Papers, box 67.

139. Seldes, review of *The Valiant Years*, *TV Guide*, 29 Apr. 1961, 15.

140. *Variety*, 30 Nov. 1960, 5.

141. ONS, "Bell and Howell" file, Acc. No. 72A1986, box 5, FCC Records, GSA.

142. Docket 12782, vol. 9, *Proc.*, 19:3685–90, 3694, 3697, 3700, 3704–6, 3718, FCC Records, NA.

143. Jack Gould, "Without a Smile," *New York Times*, 23 Apr. 1961. For another account of Treyz's speech, see *Broadcasting*, 17 Apr. 1961, 46; his response to Gould appeared in the *New York Times*, 30 Apr. 1961.

144. Docket 12782, vol. 21, *Proc.*, 61:9427–28, FCC Records, NA.

145. AB-UP, *Annual Report, 1962*, 8. By comparison, CBS a year earlier had defined its achievement of a "balanced" schedule by airing "drama, news, comedy, sports, public affairs, action-adventure, variety and children's programming." CBS, *Annual Report, 1961*, 5.

146. Val Adams, "Many TV Stations Omitted 'Bus Stop,'" *New York Times*, 5 Dec. 1961, 87; Richard K. Doan, "Glenn's Orbit Flight Was Top TV Draw," *New York Herald Tribune*, 21 Mar. 1962; "ABC-TV Coming Full Circle with Deal for 'Firestone Hour' Return," *Variety*, 28 Mar. 1962, 19; George Rosen, "Treyz Walks ABC-TV Plank," ibid., 21 Mar. 1962, 25. Gould wrote an especially savage review of the *Bus Stop* episode. See Jack Gould, "An Hour of Ugliness," *New York Times*, 4 Dec. 1961, 75, and "Fabian, Julie Harris, and the WNTA-TV Sale," ibid., 10 Dec. 1961. A secondary factor in his ouster may have been client relations. Cunniff's unflattering profile of Treyz, "Mediocrity's Mahatma," 96, offered ample evidence of his uneasy relations with advertisers.

147. Armon Glenn, "Lucrative Channels," *Barron's* 44 (27 Jan. 1964), 11; George Rosen, "It's CBS 1st; NBC 2d, ABC 3d," *Variety*, 31 Oct. 1962, 27; Watts, *Magic Kingdom*, 369–70.

148. FCC, *Reports*, 41 (1963), 803, 908, 918, 926, 1119, 1123; ABC, "Comments," 19 Feb. 1962, Docket 14231, vol. 1, and ABC, "Petition for Reconsideration," 1 July 1963, Docket 14231, vol. 3, FCC Records, NA.

149. FCC, *Reports*, 41 (1961), 997, and 45 (1962), 211; Jay Lewis, "TV's All-Channel Fiasco," *Variety*, 28 Feb. 1962, 23, and Lewis, "FCC: No Further Deintermixture Now If All-Channel Bill Passes," ibid., 21 Mar. 1962, 26; James L. Baughman, *Television's Guardians: The Federal Communications Commission and the Politics of Programming* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), chap. 6; Docket 16828, vol. 8, *Proc.* 31:4111, FCC Records, GSA. Goldenson, *Beating the Odds*, 166, exaggerates his role in persuading Congress to pass the all-channel legislation. He had virtually no clout on Capitol Hill.

150. Carol J. Loomis, "That Long, Lively Pursuit of A.B.C.," *Fortune*, Mar. 1969, 131. See also Goldenson testimony, Docket 16828, vol. 8, *Proc.* 31:1476, FCC Records, GSA; memo, Jim Sheridan to Commission, 29 Apr. 1964, Henry Papers, box 53.

151. Goldenson, *Beating the Odds*, 441.

152. Peter O. Steiner, "Program Patterns and Preferences, and the Workability of Competition in Radio Broadcasting," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 66 (May 1952): 194–223. The Steiner thesis may appear counterintuitive given the diversity cable has provided subscribers. Yet the Steiner model really applies to *limited* competition. See Willard G. Manning and Bruce M. Owen, "Television Rivalry and Network Power," *Public Policy* 24 (Winter 1976): 44–45. Consider, too, the degree to which subsets of cable channels serving comparable audiences (for example, ones for news and sports) began, as competition intensified, imitating each other.

153. Langman, "Television," 499.

154. Les Brown, *Television: The Business behind the Box* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 275.

Chapter 11. Signing Off

1. "The Ultimate Responsibility," *Time*, 16 Nov. 1959, 74, 77–80. For an example of Kintner's good press, see the fawning story by the normally tough-minded Les Brown, "The Perils of Being TV Prexy," *Variety*, 15 Dec. 1965, 31.

2. Minutes of NBC Television Affiliates Board of Delegates Meeting, 12 Aug. 1958, 3, KOMU Papers, folder 159. See also Minutes of Meeting with NBC TV Affiliates Board of Delegates, 20 Aug. 1959, 12–13, and Robert Metz, *The Today Show* (Chicago: Playboy Press, 1977), 114–16.

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ESSAY ON SOURCES

For many years, Erik Barnouw's *Golden Web* (1968) and *The Image Empire* (1970) were the standard treatments of American TV's beginnings. A veteran broadcast writer, Barnouw could not disguise his anger over the direction of television. A new wave of more even-tempered scholarship began to appear in the 1990s, including Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV: The Studio System in the Fifties* (1994); Tino Balio, ed., *Hollywood in the Age of Television* (1990); William Boddy, *Fifties Television: The Industry and Its Critics* (1990); Thomas Doherty, *Cool War*; *Cool Medium: Television*, *McCarthyism*, *and American Culture* (2003); Michael Murray and Donald Godfrey, eds., *Television in America: Local Station History from across the Nation* (1997); and Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (1992).

Many of these studies have reexamined relations between TV and the film industry. To varying degrees, they have challenged the once common view that Hollywood stubbornly failed to plan for television. The leading revisionist effort is Michele Hilmes, *Hollywood and Broadcasting: From Radio to Cable* (1990). My history of the American mass media since 1941, *Republic of Mass Culture*, 3rd ed. (2006), discusses television's effects on film as well as radio, newspapers, and magazines.

Other valuable works include Leo Bogart, *The Age of Television*, 3rd ed. (1972), a clear presentation of contemporary research on the newest medium's effects. In *The Box* (1995), Jeff Kisseloff offers a rich set of oral histories of many early TV veterans. Two similar collections are Gorham Kindem, *The Live Generation of Hollywood Film Directors* (1994), and Ira Skutch, ed., *The Days of Live* (1998). Max Wilk's breezy *Golden Age of Television* (1976) draws on some effective interviews. Paul Rutherford's *When Television Was Young: Primetime Canada*, *1952–1967* (1990) provides a very smart international comparison. *Television's Greatest Year: 1954* (1994) by TV critic R. D. Heldenfels may be the best recent lay history.

Of contemporary accounts, the *New York Times* invested more time and space on television than any other American newspaper in the 1950s; Jack Gould was the paper's chief TV reporter. Lewis L. Gould edited a fine collection of his father's columns, *Watching Television Come of Age* (2002). Without the *Times*' resources, the *New York Herald Tribune* was a respectable second in industry coverage; John Crosby was the paper's outstanding TV columnist. Some of his early columns were reprinted in *Out of the Blue* (1952). The *Los Angeles Times*' treatment of television in the 1950s falls short, though the *Los Angeles Mirror* had an unusually clever TV page.

Although many periodicals covered the industry, the *Saturday Review* took a special interest in TV and carried the leading popular cultural commentator, Gilbert Seldes. Two of his books, *The Great Audience* (1950) and *The Public Arts* (1956), deal extensively with television. Of trade publications, *Variety* offered the best coverage of the networks and studios; *Broadcasting* was more helpful regarding federal regulations and feeding the antigovernment sentiments of station owners.

Documentation on the three networks is a vexing problem. NBC left a virtual warehouse of documentation, at the Library of Congress and the Wisconsin Historical Society. The latter has the papers of NBC president and chairman Sylvester L. Weaver Jr. CBS and ABC, however, have not donated any portion of their papers to archives. Nevertheless, documents for both networks can be found in the records of several Senate and House committees as well as in some FCC and individual collections. The papers of Robert W. Hinckley, an ABC executive in the 1940s and 1950s, include four boxes of records on the network's earliest years.

Some key decision makers wrote memoirs. Columbia's enigmatic owner, William S. Paley, drafted a generally worthless one, *As It Happened* (1979). Although Frank Stanton never composed an autobiography, Columbia University has several of his oral histories. Hubbell Robinson Jr. of CBS wrote a very short but incisive recollection, which is housed in his papers at the Wisconsin Historical Society. Pat Weaver's *Best Seat in the House* (1994) has some utility, but is too unreflective. More valuable are a series of lectures Weaver gave at UCLA in 1989, the transcriptions of which are in the Weaver Papers. ABC's Leonard Goldenson wrote the best memoir of any 1950s network executive, *Beating the Odds* (1991). It includes recollections of some of Goldenson's colleagues.

Interpreters better served management. Thomas Whitworth's profile of Weaver in the *New Yorker* (16 and 23 Oct. 1954) is fascinating—and hilarious. Vance Kepley Jr. wrote several fine analyses of the NBC executive, including one in Balio, *Hollywood*. Biographies of Paley by Lewis J. Paper, *Empire* (1987), and especially Sally Bedell Smith, *In All His Glory* (1990), are useful. Fred A. Silverman's 1959 Ohio State master's thesis on ABC is very helpful. Although almost entirely descriptive, Silverman had unusual network access. He went on to become a programmer and network executive in the 1970s. On the Du Mont network, see David Weinstein's excellent *Forgotten Network: DuMont and the Birth of American Television* (2004).

The rising power of Hollywood agents in the late twentieth century inspired several long biographies of MCA's Lew Wasserman. Dennis McDougal, *The Last Mogul: Lew Wasserman, MCA, and the Hidden History of Hollywood* (1998), and Connie Bruck, *When Hollywood Had a King: The Reign of Lew Wasserman, Who Leveraged Talent into Power and Influence* (2003). Although fascinating, both are guilty, in my view, of reading history backward, that is, of giving Wasserman and MCA even greater influence over TV—and earlier—than my own research indicates.

Broadcast regulation during this era has attracted few scholars, and even less understanding. Although primarily concerned with radio, Michael J. Socolow, "To Network a Nation: NBC, CBS, and the Development of National Network Radio in the United States, 1925–1950" (Ph.D. diss., Georgetown University, 2001), is one of the few histories that carefully documents the FCC and its effects on management. See also my *Television's Guardians: The Federal Communications Commission and the Politics of Television, 1958–1967* (1985).

On the history of TV advertising, Lawrence R. Samuel, *Brought to You By: Postwar Television Advertising and the American Dream* (2001), and Erik Barnouw, *The Sponsor: Notes on a Modern Potentate* (1978), make larger arguments that do not, in my view, adequately explain industry attitudes, practices, and effects for this period. Lizabeth Cohen's *Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (2003) prematurely identifies the sponsor's interest in segmented audiences. I relied more on original materials, including the trade journals *Advertising Age*, *Printers' Ink*, *Sponsor*, and *Tide*. The J. Walter Thompson Collection at Duke holds much useful information, as do some individual papers at Wisconsin and other archives. Martin Mayer's *Madison Avenue, USA* (1958) should be consulted. Mayer's papers at

Columbia include notes of many interviews with prominent ad agents and broadcast executives.

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On television news, Edward Jay Epstein's penetrating *News from Nowhere: Television and the News* (1973) is a vital starting point. In contrast, Edward Bliss Jr., *Now the News: The Story of Broadcast News* (1991), is helpful but in a thickly detailed way. Many veteran TV newscasters and producers wrote memoirs: Reuven Frank's *Out of Thin Air: The Brief Wonderful Life of Network News* (1991) is the best. See also David Brinkley's *11 Presidents, 4 Wars, 22 Political Conventions . . .* (1995); Walter Cronkite, *A Reporter's Life* (1996); Fred W. Friendly, *Due to Circumstances beyond Our Control* (1967); and Sig Mickelson, *The Decade That Shaped Television News: CBS in the 1950s* (1998). Murrow inspired many biographies: Joseph Persico's *Edward R. Murrow* (1988) is the least fawning. See also Jeff Merron, "Murrow on TV: *See it Now*, *Person to Person*, and the Making of a 'Masscult Personality,'" *Journalism Monographs* no. 106 (July 1988), and Nicholas Lemann, "The Murrow Doctrine," *New Yorker* (23 and 30 Jan. 2006): 38–43. The televising of the 1952 conventions is closely reviewed in Gordon L. Gray, "Television and the National Nominating Conventions of 1952" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1957). Nancy E. Bernhard, *U.S. Television News and Cold War Propaganda, 1947–1960* (1999), is a critical review of TV news' relationship to foreign policy makers.

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David Sarnoff opens the RCA Pavilion at the 1939 World's Fair. Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research.

"Mr. Television," Milton Berle. Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research.

Studio One's modern-dress production of *Julius Caesar*, 1949. Robert Keith (*third from left*) played Brutus. Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research.

Sylvester L. "Pat" Weaver Jr. of NBC in 1953. Weaver imagined a different television. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, NYWT&S Collection.

Weaver and Dave Garroway at the launch of *The Today Show*, 1952. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, NYWT&S Collection.

Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca spoof a Western movie on *Your Show of Shows*. Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research.

Mary Martin as *Peter Pan*. Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research.

Betty Furness: "You Can Be Sure, If It's Westinghouse," 1954. Jim Hansen, photographer. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Look Magazine Collection.

William S. Paley, chairman of the board of CBS, in the late 1950s. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, NYWT&S Collection.

Frank N. Stanton, president of CBS Inc., testifying before a congressional committee in the 1950s. (United Press.) Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, NYWT&S Collection.

The Toast of the Town, Ed Sullivan and the Toastettes in the early 1950s. Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research.

Lucille Ball and Vivian Vance on the set of *I Love Lucy*, 1957. Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research.

Ed Sullivan and Phil Silvers, backstage in 1955. John Vachon, photographer. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Look Magazine Collection.

Art Carney and Jackie Gleason rehearse for *The Honeymooners*, 1955. Douglas Jones, photographer. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Look Magazine Collection.

Edward R. Murrow and Joseph McCarthy Jr. on *See It Now*, 1954. Kenneth Eide, photographer. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Look Magazine Collection.

Chet Huntley and David Brinkley, the faces of NBC News, 1956–70. Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research.

President of American Broadcasting–United Paramount Leonard Goldenson watches the president of his broadcast network, Robert Kintner, receive an award from Sydney Roslow of the Pulse, a ratings service, in October 1955. A year later, Goldenson fired him. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, NYWT&S Collection.

Lawrence Welk and admirers, 1956. Maurice Terrell, photographer. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Look Magazine Collection.

James Garner (*center*) on the set of *Maverick* in 1958. Maurice Terrell, photographer. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Look Magazine Collection.